GAMBIT

Grandmaster Secrets

Counterattack!

Zenon Franco

A step-by-step guide to turning defence into victory

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Grandmaster Secrets:

Counterattack!

Zenon Franco

Translated by Manuel Perez Carballo

GAMBIT

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(D)	see next diagram

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Introduction

Defence and counterattack are topics very much linked to attack. The writing of this book is therefore the logical complement to my previous work *The Art of Attacking Chess*.

It is obvious that it is as important to defend and counterattack with dexterity as it is to attack with precision. The best players of all time have mastered both arts. However, there are world champions whose names are strongly associated with defence, like Tigran Petrosian, or with counterattack, like Emanuel Lasker.

At the beginning of his career another of the great players in history, Viktor Korchnoi, had as his main virtue his great tenacity, the foundation of a successful defence. I remember Miguel Najdorf playing endless sessions of blitz. Sometimes young masters would show him they were decent attackers but they didn't defend with the same precision. Then a triumphant Najdorf would say: "He is just an attacking player! He can't defend" and he would prove it.

This book has a similar structure to my previous one, and also to *Winning Chess Explained.* The chapters contain several games illustrating certain strategic topics. The book contains seven chapters, whose headings are self-explanatory, but which are briefly described below:

Chapter 1, 'Lasker, the Master of Defence and Counterattack', is devoted to four of Lasker's games, where the topics covered in this book are present in a fundamental way.

In Chapter 2, 'Refuting Premature Attacks', our topic is the situation where one side must face an attack which doesn't seem to be sufficiently prepared or justified.

Chapter 3, 'Fighting Blow by Blow', deals with cases where defence and counterattack are intimately related.

Chapter 4, 'Regrouping', examines defensive manoeuvring that improves the position of the pieces, which can often form the core of the defence.

We shall devote Chapter 5, 'Prophylactic Thinking', to analyse in detail positions where measures are taken before – even long before – an attack is faced, as a preventive measure, or to thwart the reinforcement of the enemy position.

In Chapter 6, 'Simplification', we shall analyse the defensive methodology of simplifying and/or giving up material in order to be able to defend and, if possible, switch to the counterattack.

Chapter 7, 'Three Memorable Struggles', features three games by three world champions from different ages, which are models of extremely tenacious defence, with multiple defensive resources.

Before each main game we shall provide a brief description of it, and within it, or as supplementary games, we shall show examples relating to the main game, to try to understand better what is going on. Sometimes the supplementary game(s) will come before the main game, if they introduce a key theme that will help explain the events in the main game. At the end of each game we shall revise at more length the key moments and the lessons to be extracted from the game.

After finishing one or more chapters there will be exercises of varied complexity that feature the topics dealt in those chapters.

As is usual in books on the middlegame, the notes take into account those of the protagonists themselves, whether in words or through symbols. I have sought to expand upon and illuminate the players' conclusions, with an emphasis on the topic that is our focus in each chapter. I have also

incorporated the insights and corrections of the best current computer programs, as they often highlight unexpected resources in positions that had been considered settled by earlier analysts – we can learn much from these highly tenacious analytical engines! Note that since the analysis has been systematically computer-checked, I have not stated in every case "Fritz/Rybka finds no flaw with this variation", as this would become unnecessarily tedious. Whenever the engines have indicated an important improvement, this has naturally been incorporated. But tactical flawlessness is not primary the primary goal of this text – the objective is rather to explain the processes of defence and counterattack, and so to help the reader become more successful in handling these key aspects of chess skill.

As in my previous books, at many points you will find questions before key moves; you can simply take them as rhetorical questions – as a stepping-stone to the answers and explanations that appear next – and thus probably learn new things. Alternatively, you can also take them as a challenge, stopping to answer them, and asking yourself "What would I do now?" This way you will get the most out of the lessons from the game.

This methodology – taking an active part in the lesson – has been emphatically proposed in the last few years by Spanish author and scientific popularizer Eduard Punset for any sort of learning, although perhaps we chess-players are already familiar with it. If we are not yet, this could be a good moment to start.

I want to finish with a special acknowledgement to IM David Martinez Martin for his always pertinent suggestions and corrections.

Zenon Franco
Pontevareas, May 2009

Dedication

La florida "Isla rodeada de tierra"

1 Lasker, the Master of Defence and Counterattack

Dr Emanuel Lasker, besides being a mathematician and a philosopher, was one of the best chessplayers in history. He had a whole set of chess virtues – he handled the endgame exceptionally well, was a master of the attack, and a pioneer in the effective use of psychology in the chess struggle.

Nevertheless, if there is any world champion who can be considered the 'patron saint' of defence and counterattack, then it is Lasker, as his play was so full of energy and resilience, and due to his capacity for hard work, together with his tremendous tactical ability.

Not for nothing did Viktor Korchnoi refer to him as "my chess hero", deeming that of all the building blocks of chess – such as the scientific element, the artistic, the sporting, the psychological – Lasker put the fighting one first, "the duel of the wits". Korchnoi also believed that Lasker underestimated the scientific element.

Some years ago John Nunn pointed out that we still lack a great book on Lasker. Since then a number of interesting works have appeared, and Kasparov has dedicated an excellent chapter to him in the series on his predecessors. However, I have the impression that the great work doing full justice to Lasker's legacy is yet to be written.

It is clear that in order for that resilience and multitude of amazing resources to emerge, Lasker first had to be in a precarious position, as in the case of the following classic game:

Game 1

Siegbert Tarrasch – Emanuel Lasker

World Ch match (game 2), Düsseldorf 1908

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Steinitz Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 ♘f6 4 0-0 d6

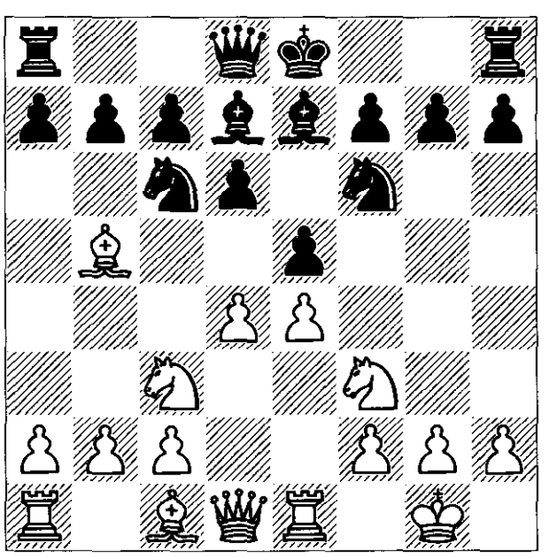
The Berlin Variation, 4...♘xe4, was revitalized by Kramnik, who used it successfully to neutralize Kasparov's opening advantage in the 2000 world championship match in London. The main line, 5 d4 ♘d6 6 ♗xc6 dxc6 7 dxe5 ♘f5 8 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8, was the battleground of the Kasparov-Kramnik games.

5 d4 ♗d7 6 ♘c3 ♗e7 7 ♖e1 *(D)*

The Steinitz Defence was very popular during the first half of the 20th century. White has more space but not much more than that.

7...exd4

B



7...0-0? is a known mistake, losing a pawn to the so-called 'Tarrasch Trap' after 8 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 (no better is 10...♖fxd8 11 ♘xe5 ♗xe4? 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♘d3 f5 14 f3 ♗c5+ 15 ♔f1, winning material) 11 ♘xe5, and here 11...♗xe4? only makes things worse: 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♘d3 f5 14 f3 ♗c5+ 15 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 16 ♗g5 ♖d5 17 ♗e7 ♖e8 18 c4 1-0 Tarrasch-Marco, Dresden 1892.

This is a very well-known trap, more than a century old. It is therefore odd that a world championship candidate fell for it, albeit via a slightly different move-order and with the moves 3...a6 4 ♗a4 added, which doesn't change the situation. Tal-Ivkov, Belgrade vs Moscow match 1974 continued 11...♖axd8 12 ♘xe5 ♗d7, but Black couldn't save the game.

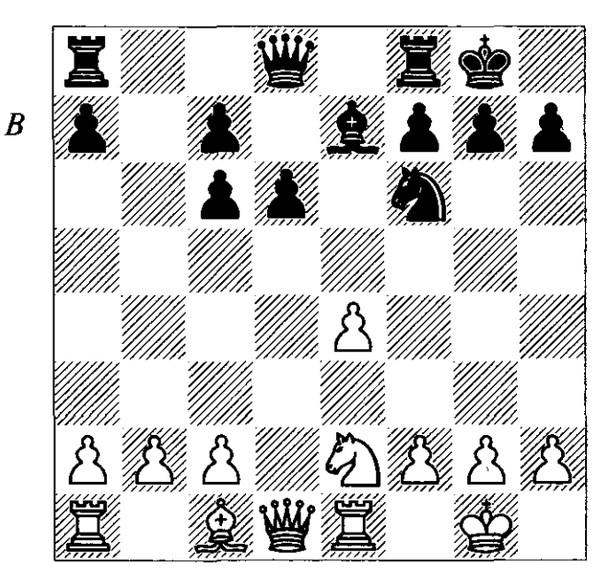
8 ♘xd4 0-0 9 ♘xc6

Doubling pawns is tempting – 9 ♗xc6 bxc6 10 ♕f3 is of similar strength, whereas 9 ♗f1 has a different idea, avoiding exchanges. This is advisable when one has more space, leaving the opponent with a mobility problem.

9...♗xc6 10 ♗xc6 bxc6 11 ♘e2!? *(D)*

The knight is heading for f5 or h5. This, combined with b3 and ♗b2, threatens to create strong pressure against the black kingside.

This move-order is more annoying than starting with 11 b3, which can be met by the typical regrouping manoeuvre 11...♘d7, followed by ...♗f6.



How is Black to respond?

11...♘d7 is still possible but Black's structure may end up even worse after 12 ♘d4 c5 13 ♘c6 ♕e8 14 ♗f4, and the e5 thrust requires attention.

11...d5 isn't completely satisfactory either; there could follow 12 e5 ♘e4 13 ♘d4 ♕d7, when White's better structure, with only two pawn-islands compared to Black's three, gives him a comfortable plus. He can continue with 14 c3 followed by ♗e3, ♕c2 and ♖ad1, preparing the c4 break after the timely eviction of the e4-knight by f3.

11...♘xe4? is completely mistaken since 12 ♘d4 wins a piece, but this fact can give us an idea, combining usefulness and necessity: Korchnoi suggests 11...♖e8!, threatening to capture on e4. After 12 ♘d4 c5 13 ♘f5 ♘d7 Black has a reasonable position.

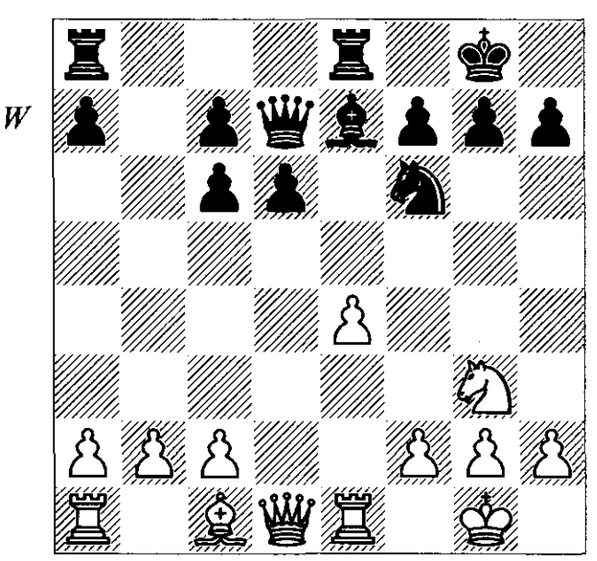
11...♕d7?!

Black decides to go for ...d5 after preparing it with ...♕d7 and ...♖ad8 but there is a flaw in this plan.

The main drawback of this move is that it occupies the natural place of the f6-knight. This is not very flexible and since it doesn't accomplish its idea, the black pieces end up badly coordinated.

12 ♘g3 ♖fe8 *(D)*

Réti recommended 12...♖fd8, in order to play ...♖ab8, insisting on the ...d5 break and at the same time keeping the e8-square for the retreat of the f6-knight.



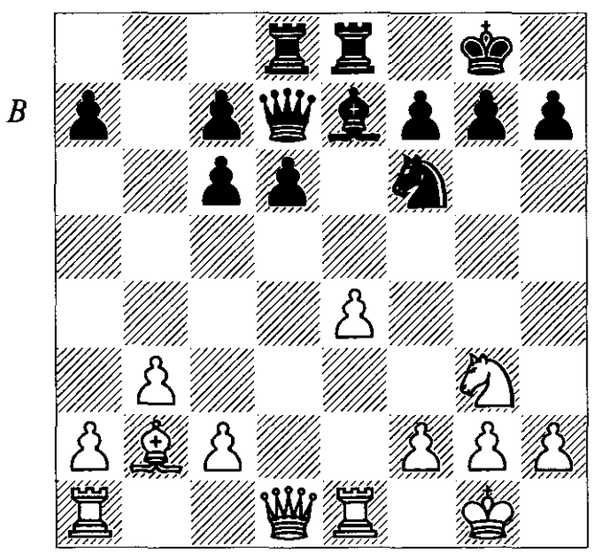
13 b3 ♖ad8

Backtracking with 13...♕c8 was suggested, although from a psychological point of view this is very difficult. The idea is to regroup after

14 ♗b2 with 14...♘d7 but White's initiative is dangerous after 15 ♘h5, forcing the weakening 15...g6, since 15...♗f8? loses to 16 ♗xg7! ♗xg7 17 ♕g4. Instead 15 ♘f5 is less strong, as it can be met by 15...♗f6!? (again 15...♗f8? loses to 16 ♗xg7!).

This last line brings 13...♕d8 into consideration, so that Black can continue 14 ♗b2 ♘d7 15 ♘h5 ♘f6 without allowing doubled pawns, but psychologically this is as difficult to play as 13...♕c8, if not more.

14 ♗b2 *(D)*



The jump ♘f5 seems imminent. In combination with ♕f3, it is to be feared. How should Black react? It is difficult to go for 14...g6 because the weaknesses of the dark squares near the king are then very marked and White is better after 15 ♕d2.

14...♘g4?

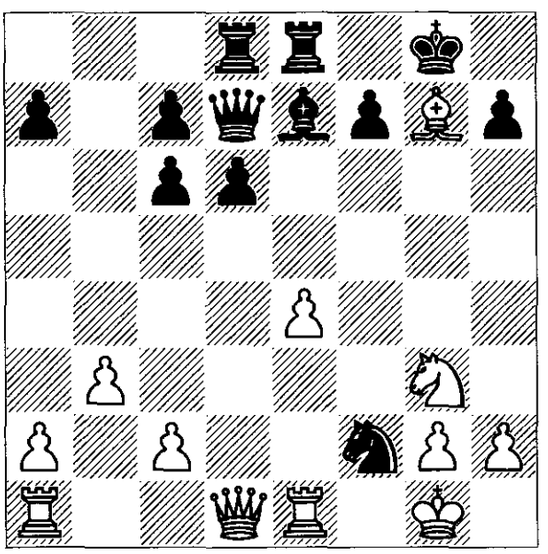
Given that Lasker had a tremendous tactical ability – as well as other virtues – we don't know whether this was a tactical mistake or a practical resource to complicate the game using nothing less than his own king as bait.

According to Réti, Lasker played dubious variations on purpose in order to 'force' his opponents to play positions which were not to their liking, even though they were objectively better for them. This opinion has been repeated many times, although there have been voices who disagree.

14...♕e6 seems more resilient, protecting the f6-knight so as to drop the e7-bishop back, although it is possible that Lasker didn't like Black's prospects in a quiet situation after 15 ♘f5 ♗f8. Then 16 ♕f3 highlights the fact that Black's position is full of weaknesses; e.g., 16...♘xe4 17 ♘d4 ♕g6 18 ♘xc6. There are other annoying continuations, such as 16 ♘d4 ♕d7 17 ♕d3, when again Black must reconcile himself to a passive position. This certainly wouldn't have been a good practical option against Tarrasch.

15 ♗xg7! ♘xf2!? *(D)*

Of course, 15...♔xg7? is not possible due to 16 ♘f5+.



After this, the white king won't be safe either but as Korchnoi pointed out, the g-pawn is the most important of the three in front of the king, and White will be able to exploit this some way or another.

White now has more than one tempting continuation.

16 ♔xf2

Objectively, this is perfectly good. White gets an extra pawn and an almost decisive advantage.

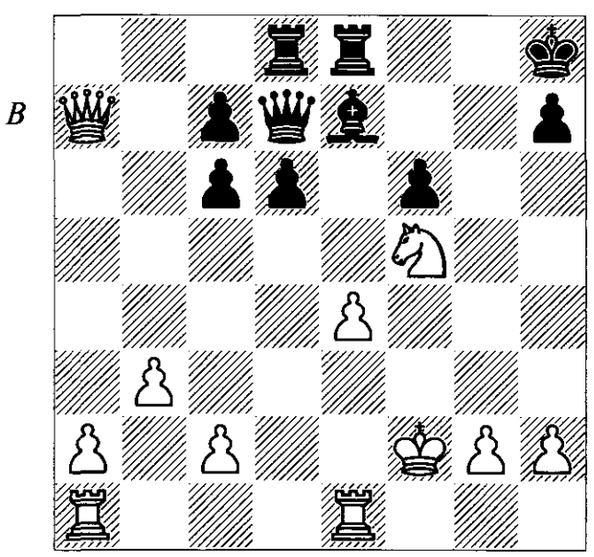
Nonetheless, Tarrasch was criticized for slowing down the attack against the black king. 16 ♕d4!, avoiding any premature simplification, is possibly somewhat stronger, and above all much more dangerous from a practical point of view. Then 16...c5? loses, among other reasons, due to 17 ♕xf2 ♔xg7 18 ♘f5+ ♔h8 19 ♘h6. After 16...♘g4 17 ♘f5 ♕e6, White must neutralize Black's tactical resources, neither rushing into 18 ♖e3? c5 19 ♕c3 ♗f6!, nor 18 h3? ♗f6!; in both cases Black is already out of

the woods. 18 ♕c3! is stronger, with the terrible threat of 19 ♕g3, stopping 18...♗f6? due to 19 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 20 ♕g3 ♕g6 21 ♕xg4. Another virtue of ♕c3 is that it hits the weak pawns on the queenside, which proves decisive in the event of 18...♕g6 19 h3 ♗f6 20 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 21 ♕xc6 d5 22 ♕xc7 ♖d7 23 ♕f4. There remains 18...♘e5, but all the white pieces are attacking the black king after 19 ♖e3! f6 20 ♖g3 ♘g6 21 ♖f1.

Many years later, Dvoretsky suggested 16 ♕f3!?, reaching the conclusion that it was also promising for White.

According to Réti, Lasker would not have played 14...♘g4? against an attacking player, but he did so against Tarrasch, who would rather play in a meticulous and ordered manner rather than going for murky tactical complications.

16...♔xg7 17 ♘f5+ ♔h8 18 ♕d4+ f6 19 ♕xa7 *(D)*



White has won a pawn and is much better, However, the greatest threat to the black king's life, namely the dark-squared bishop, has disappeared. White still has to use his good technique in order to win.

19...♗f8

Unlike a few moves ago, and at the cost of a pawn, Black's king is no longer in danger. He now has a clear plan: to put pressure on the isolated e4-pawn by doubling rooks on the e-file, and with ideas of an eventual ...d5.

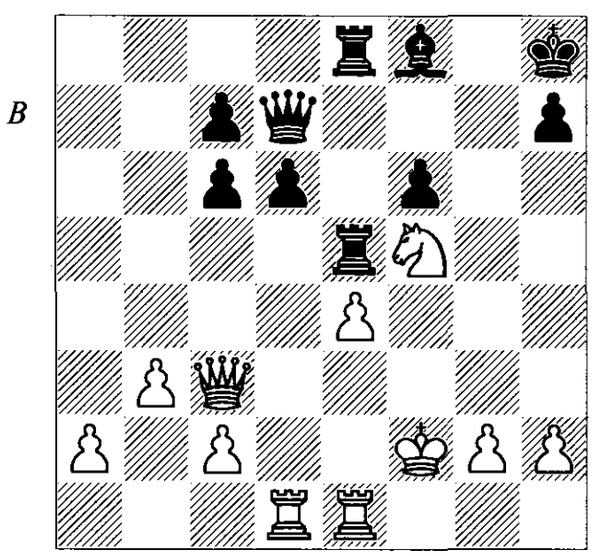
Let's not forget either that the white king has become exposed.

20 ♕d4 ♖e5 21 ♖ad1

White had wasted time – the prospects of victory through a direct attack which he must have cherished after 15 ♗xg7! have vanished. Now he must adapt to the new situation.

Taking into account Black's plan, White should have considered anticipating it by taking the sting out of the ...d5 break. He can do this by overprotecting the e4-pawn with 21 g4, so that he can meet 21...♖de8 with 22 ♖e3 followed by ♖ae1. Nevertheless the exposed situation of the white king becomes relevant after 21...d5!?. In the event of 22 exd5? ♖xf5+! 23 gxf5 ♗c5! 24 ♕xc5 ♕xf5+, Black gets perpetual check if the king stays on the kingside, or captures the queen if the king goes to the d-file, with equal chances.

21...♖de8 22 ♕c3 *(D)*



White needs to regroup to stop the ...d5 break – in case it is dangerous – and later on exploit his passed a-pawn. For the time being he puts pressure on the c6-pawn and, indirectly, on the one on f6, buying time to protect e4 better. But if only he also had time to bring his king to safety with ♔g1...

22...♕f7!

This is what White wanted to prevent! It is easy to understand why White was disconcerted by this. Now the capture 23 ♕xc6 is unclear because after 23...♖c5 24 ♕a6 ♖xc2+ 25 ♖e2 ♖c5, although Black is still a pawn down, at least he has exchanged a doubled pawn for the healthier one on c2.

23 ♘g3?!

White starts to lose the plot. This retreat of the dominant, if somewhat insecure, f5-knight only concedes more space to Black.

As Korchnoi indicated, White could protect e4 in a better way by 23 ♕f3, and after 23...d5 24 exd5 cxd5 25 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 26 ♖e1 ♗c5+ 27 ♔f1 ♕e6 28 ♖xe5 ♕xe5 make the most of the simplification – his king is now safer. He can then start pushing his passed pawn with 29 a4, keeping the advantage.

23...♗h6!

At last the bishop can breathe...

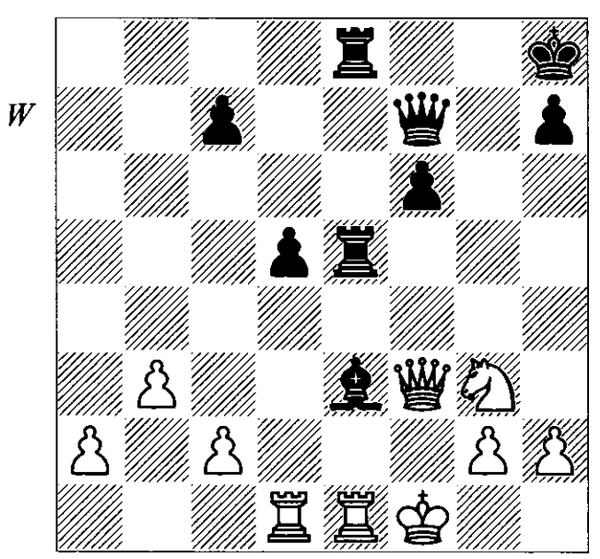
24 ♕f3

24 ♘f5!? was worth considering, going back to the previous situation, since 24...♕h5 is not to be feared due to 25 ♕f3!.

24...d5 25 exd5?!

Now 25 ♘f5! was definitely more appropriate. Black must either retreat the h6-bishop or enter an inferior ending by 25...♕g6 26 ♘xh6 ♕xh6 27 exd5 ♕h4+ 28 ♕g3.

25...♗e3+ 26 ♔f1 cxd5 *(D)*



27 ♖d3?

This is a clear mistake that allows Black to get the upper hand – all his pieces will become perfectly coordinated. 27 ♘f5, as mentioned by Tarrasch himself, is better, although after 27...d4 Black has considerably improved his position compared to that of some moves ago.

27...♕e6

The powerful f5-knight won't reappear again and the white king will gradually feel more awkward.

28 ♖e2 f5!

The black pawns on f5 and d5 will be used to fortify the strong e3-bishop and also to drive away the poor g3-knight, which is now being turned into a piece without good prospects.

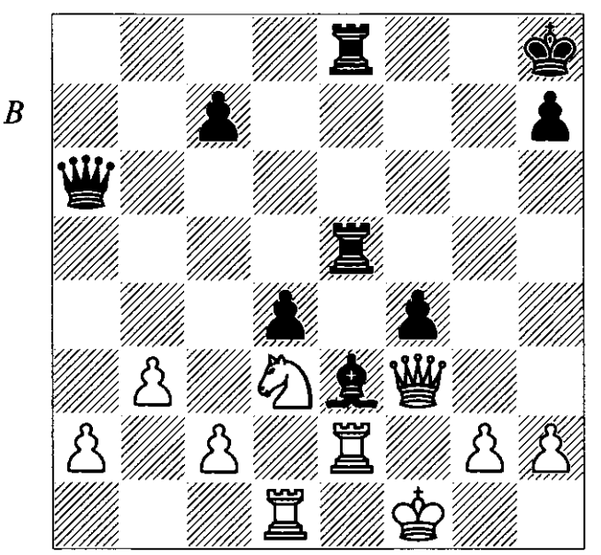
29 ♖d1

It is not possible to give the g3-knight a good destination with 29 ♔e1 since Black wins material after 29...f4 30 ♘f1 ♗f2+!.

29...f4 30 ♘h1 d4 31 ♘f2 ♕a6!

Threatening to win by 32...♗xf2.

32 ♘d3 *(D)*



And now? White has very little room, but how is Black to penetrate his position?

32...♖g5!

Answer: by preparing ...♕h6.

33 ♖a1 ♕h6 34 ♔e1

After 34 h3 ♖g3 35 ♕d5 f3 (not 35...♕xh3? 36 ♕xd4+!) Black decisively opens lines against the white king.

34...♕xh2 35 ♔d1 ♕g1+ 36 ♘e1 ♖ge5! 37 ♕c6 ♖5e6?

37...♖8e7 (threatening ...d3) is better; e.g., 38 a4 ♔g8!, threatening ...♗f2, and meeting both 39 ♕f3 and 39 ♕b7 with 39...h5!.

38 ♕xc7 ♖8e7 39 ♕d8+?!

This and the next move allow a deadly tactic; 39 ♕c8+! keeps an eye on the e6-rook.

39...♔g7 40 a4? f3 41 gxf3 ♗g5! 0-1

42 ♖xe6 is met by 42...♖xe6 and ...♕e3.

Lasker's careless handling of the opening soon left him in a very precarious situation. In order to extricate himself, he did not hesitate to sharpen the game to the maximum. By playing

14...♘g4? he permitted the tactical blow 15 ♗xg7! despite his chances being objectively worse.

This is a practical resource worth remembering, valid for the fight at the board, knowing all too well that with Fritz or Rybka at hand it would be useless.

It has been said that Lasker took into account the psychological aspect of the struggle, guessing that between two advantageous continuations Tarrasch wouldn't go for the more complicated one, which at the same time was the strongest, 16 ♕d4!.

The next stage – with 22...♕f7! and 28...f5! – is a masterful lesson on regrouping and counterattack, culminating with Black's complete control of the fight and a winning attack.

The aforementioned methods of defence and counterattack used by Lasker are completely valid resources, widely used in current chess.

Lastly, let us hear what the protagonists had to say:

Tarrasch: "I ought to be ashamed of this game. As far back as the 15th move, after the stroke on g7, my advantage was so great that Lasker, who had a habit of walking around the hall, told the spectators, while I was considering my moves, that 'I always lose the second game'. But here, the effects of my previous loss came to bear.

"On the 16th move, I could not decide whether to play for a continuation of the attack or the win of a pawn, and chose the second possibility, telling myself that my opponent might be able to withstand the attack, and then I would regret not taking an easy pawn, which would be enough to secure me the win.

"Had I not lost the first game, I would certainly have played for the attack, since even if I had not won the game, I would not have been in an inferior position. But the concern was to equalize the match score and catch up with my opponent.

"On the other hand, this plan should also have been enough for victory. But my indecisiveness about which was the best defensive plan, and the terrible time-pressure it induced, led to my making a whole series of weak moves, which ruined a won position."

Lasker: "With my back to the wall, I decided to allow a powerful attack against the position of my king, intending to seek compensation in other factors. Had I hesitated, I would have lost the initiative completely. Tarrasch took the opportunity offered him, drove my king to an exposed square, maintained his threats, and even gained the material advantage of a pawn.

"He thought that he had assured himself an advantage sufficient for victory; but in fact, as later became clear, he had only equality at best.

"Had he, like Pillsbury or Steinitz, taken himself in hand, refused the insignificant material advantage, and thrown himself into the whirlwind of attacking combinations, he would have won. He was not to be allowed the quiet, risk-free exploitation of his material advantage. I gave him a choice, and he made a mistake.

"His pieces were driven back from their strong positions, and by the 41st move, he was beaten."

Our next game bears some resemblance to the previous one – Lasker uses counterattack as a defensive resource.

Game 2

Frank James Marshall – Emanuel Lasker

St Petersburg 1914

Old Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 d6

Although playing Black, Lasker had to win in order to keep in touch with the tournament leader, Capablanca. Hence he doesn't play one of the safer lines of the Queen's Gambit. Instead, he chooses an opening that was considered

dubious at the time, but where he could get out of the known paths right from the very first moves.

3 ♘c3 ♘bd7 4 ♘f3 e5 5 e3

This modest move is less promising than 5 e4 because it closes the diagonal of the c1-bishop.

5...♗e7

In those years the King's Indian wasn't considered a sound defence – not even Lasker dared play 5...g6, even with White committed to a very unassuming set-up.

Seen almost a century later, the text-move has the same shortcomings of 5 e3. Now it is the f8-bishop that has its dynamism curtailed. It would have been much more active on the long diagonal.

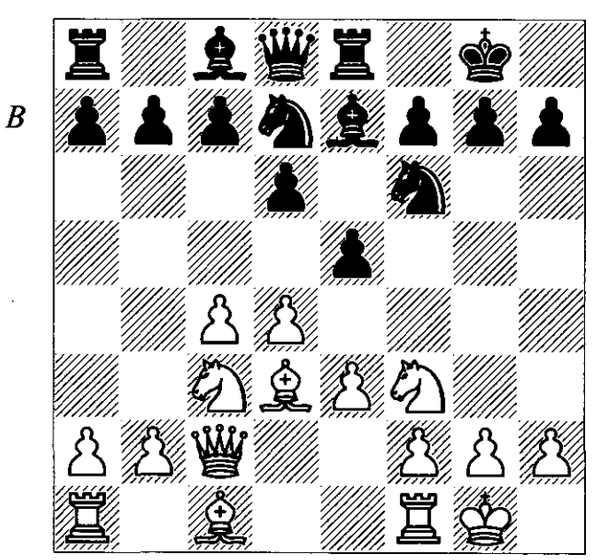
6 ♗d3

One of the few advantages 5 e3 has over 5 e4 is the fact that White left the b1-h7 diagonal open for this bishop – he will unexpectedly benefit from it.

6...0-0 7 ♕c2 ♖e8

A natural move, preparing to drop the bishop back to f8. 7...c6 is good too. Instead, taking on d4 would be premature because it frees the c1-bishop.

8 0-0 *(D)*



8...♗f8?!

This normal-looking move has a tactical shortcoming. 8...c6 is better; this thematic move is useful because it controls d5 and open a way for the queen, among other virtues.

Although a relative loss of time, 8...h6 was worth considering too, and only then ...♗f8, preventing the game continuation. The closed character of the position and White's modest set-up allow Black some – but not complete – leeway.

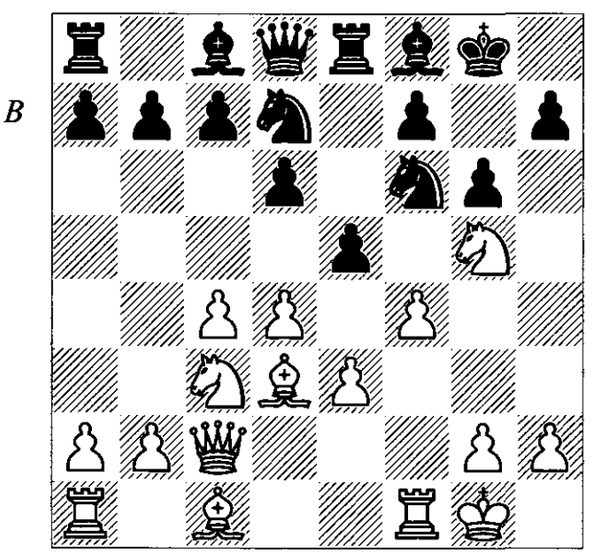
9 ♘g5!

Marshall exploits the drawback in the placement of the black pieces – he manages to open the f-file, placing the black king in great danger.

9...g6

The key is that, f8 being occupied, 9...h6?? is not possible because of 10 ♗h7+ and mate.

10 f4! *(D)*



Only ten moves have been played and Black is already in a very tricky situation. He has to try to prevent White from opening the f-file, for after a subsequent fxg6, g6 would become weak – the dangers of a sacrifice on g6 are clear.

10...exd4

Black creates a weakness on d4. This, however, doesn't stop White's offensive. In any case, this is better than 10...exf4, which just gives White the useful extra option of 11 ♖xf4.

Black's queenside is out of play, so 10...♘g4!? looks dubious, as it continues to neglect development. Nevertheless, this attempt to prevent fxe5 requires analysis:

a) 11 ♘xf7!? ♔xf7 12 fxe5+ ♔g7 13 h3 is tempting but unclear. Neither Fritz 11 nor Rybka 2.3 is optimistic about White's attacking prospects.

b) The simple 11 h3, speeding up development, seems more dangerous.

b1) After 11...exd4? 12 exd4 ♘e3 (the retreat 12...♘gf6 fails to the obvious 13 f5) 13

♗xe3 ♖xe3, the difference in activity is decisive: White wins material by cutting off the retreat of the rook with 14 ♗e4!; e.g., 14...♘f6 15 ♕f2! ♖xc3 16 bxc3, and White keeps his advantage. If 16...h6 there follows 17 ♗d3 hxg5 18 fxg5.

b2) 11...♘h6! is best, when although Black has wasted time – it is not clear whether he has improved his pieces – at least the position is still closed, which is very important.

11 exd4 ♗g7

There is no time for 11...♘g4? 12 h3 ♘h6 because the c1-bishop protects the g5-knight and White would follow with the very strong 13 f5.

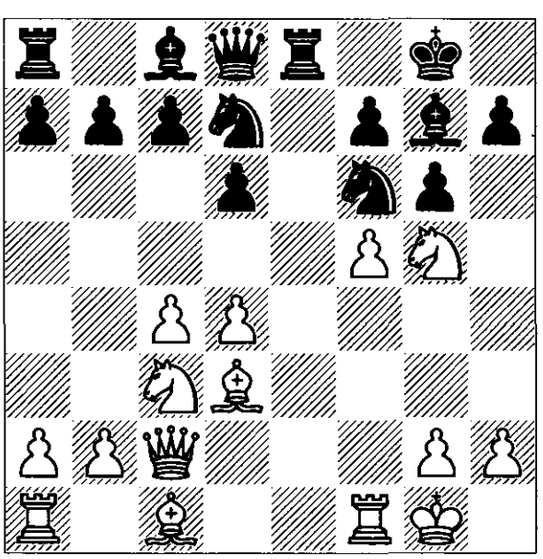
Needless to say, weakening the king's position even further with 11...h6?! would be met by 12 ♘xf7! ♔xf7 13 ♗xg6+ ♔g8 14 ♗xe8 ♕xe8, and now 15 ♘b5 would force the black queen to give up control of g6. After 15...♕d8 White gets a big plus with 16 ♕g6+ ♗g7 17 f5.

12 f5 *(D)*

Marshall has achieved his first goal, namely to weaken the king's position and open lines against it.

This move is better than continuing development with 12 ♗d2, which can be met by 12...♘g4!, and after 13 ♘f3 c5, Black has managed to distract White from the attack.

B



12...♘g4

Lasker initiates a hand-to-hand fight: he counterattacks in the centre, rather than settling for a passive defence with 12...♘f8.

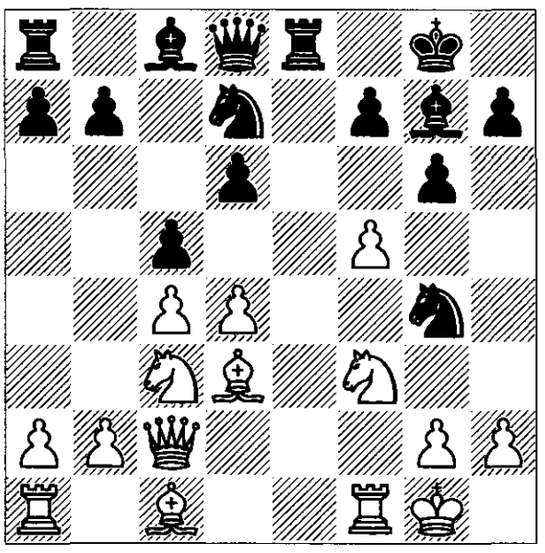
13 ♘f3 c5?! *(D)*

This was the idea. Even though behind in development and less active, Black wants to open up another front in the centre. This could be a little too much because White has many options. The text-move reminds us of 14...♘g4 from the previous game.

13...♘e3?! is poor because it exchanges an already developed piece for one that hasn't moved. White's development advantage is felt after 14 ♗xe3 ♖xe3, when he has a pleasant choice between the simple 15 ♖ae1 and 15 ♘d5, when Black has to try the exchange sacrifice 15...♖xf3!? because 15...♖e8 16 ♖ae1! (rather than 16 fxg6 fxg6 17 ♗xg6 hxg6 18 ♕xg6 ♘f8 19 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 20 ♕xe8 ♕g6 21 ♖ae1 ♕xe8 22 ♖xe8 ♔f7) is miserable for Black.

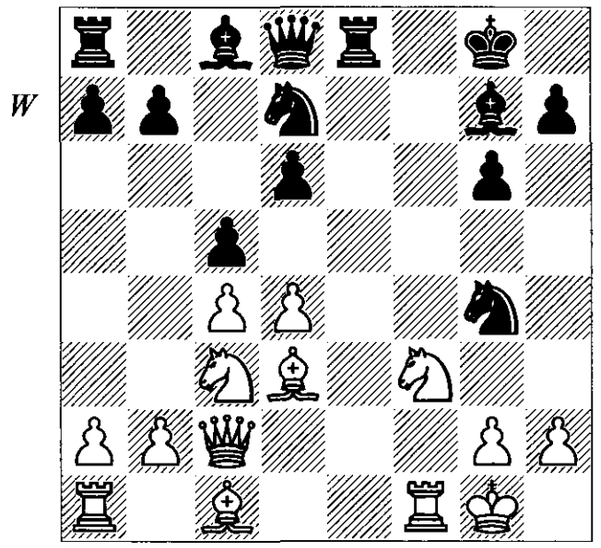
The best option was deemed to be continuing developing with 13...♘df6. Nevertheless, White achieves a slight advantage by simple means; for instance, with 14 fxg6 fxg6 15 h3 ♘e3 16 ♗xe3 ♖xe3 17 ♖ae1, when White commands the centre and has a lead in development – Black's bishop-pair is not enough compensation.

W



14 fxg6 fxg6 *(D)*

Another unconventional resource, based on a concrete reason: 14...hxg6 is strongly met by 15 ♗g5!. Then 15...♗xd4+ 16 ♔h1 f6 is refuted by 17 ♗xg6!; e.g., 17...fxg5 18 ♗f7+! ♔h8 (18...♔xf7? 19 ♘xg5++ ♔e7 20 ♘d5#) 19 ♕g6 ♘df6 20 ♘xd4 cxd4 21 ♘d5 ♘xd5 22 ♕h5+ ♔g7 23 ♗xe8, winning material. On the other hand, 14...♕a5 gives White another developing tempo – he would then play 15 ♖ae1, with a big advantage.



The game is at a critical point where the value of each move is huge and a mistake can easily be decisive. Of course now the sacrifice 15 ♗xg6? hxg6 16 ♕xg6 ♘f8 17 ♕h5 ♘f6 is not satisfactory. Once the most straightforward route is ruled out, White has to look for a less violent way.

15 h3?

After this, Black's previous move is wholly justified – Black is starting to steer the game in his favour.

White had the logical 15 ♗g5!, mentioned by Tarrasch in the tournament book. Black must not then be greedy and play 15...♗xd4+? 16 ♔h1 ♗f6 17 ♗xg6! ♗xg5 (17...hxg6 loses to 18 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 19 ♘d5) 18 ♗xe8 ♘e3 19 ♗f7+ ♔h8 20 ♕d3 ♘xf1 21 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 22 ♖xf1 because White's lead in development is yet again decisive. Perhaps Black should play 15...♘df6, freeing the c8-bishop, although after 16 dxc5 dxc5 (or 16...♘e3 17 ♗xe3 ♖xe3 18 ♖ad1, with a similar evaluation to the main line) 17 ♖ae1 all the white pieces are in play – the same cannot be said of the c8-bishop and the a8-rook. White's advantage would therefore be clear.

15...cxd4!

Of course Lasker wasn't going to play the timid 15...♘e3?, reaching similar positions to what's already been seen after 16 ♗xe3 ♖xe3 17 ♘d5 ♖e8 18 ♖ae1.

16 ♗g5

The outlook for Black's minor pieces is very different after 16 ♘d5, when he can choose 16...♘ge5 17 ♘xd4 ♘c5 or even seek complications with 16...♘e3 17 ♗xe3 dxe3, followed by ...♘c5, since 18 ♗xg6? hxg6 19 ♕xg6 ♘f8! 20 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 21 ♕xe8 ♕e6 is not be feared: Black easily defends because White doesn't have open files as before, nor enough attackers.

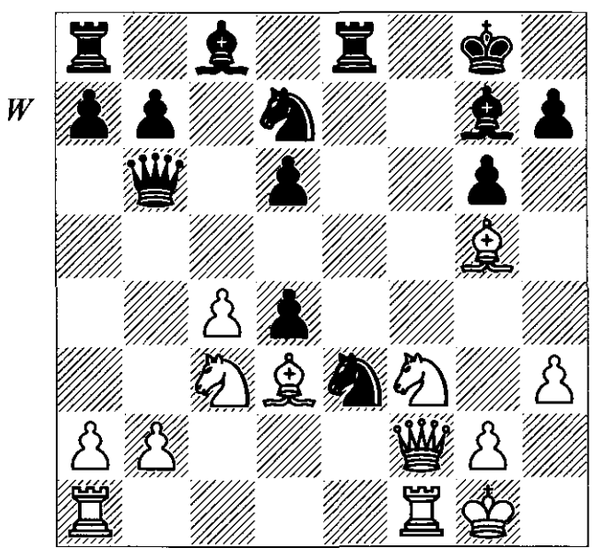
16...♘e3!

This *zwischenzug* is key to the defence thought out by Lasker, steering the game in his favour. Instead, after 16...♕a5? there would follow 17 b4! and then ♘d5 or ♘b5. Yet again White's dynamic advantage would be decisive.

17 ♕f2

The sad 17 ♗xe3 dxe3 would have lost both a tempo and a pawn.

17...♕b6! *(D)*



The queen provides yet more support to the wedge on e3.

18 ♘d5

White could play 18 ♖ae1 but then 18...♖f8! is strong, getting out of the pin, neutralizing the pressure on the f-file, and indirectly protecting the pawn because 19 ♗xe3 dxe3 20 ♕xe3? loses to 20...♖xf3!: if 21 ♖xf3, there follows 21...♗d4, whereas 21 ♕xb6 is met with the *zwischenzug* 21...♖xf1+.

18...♘xd5 19 cxd5 ♘c5

Black attacks the d3-bishop, is about to complete his development by connecting the rooks, and furthermore has an extra pawn. The risky tactical duel initiated by Lasker with 12...♘g4 proved a complete success.

20 ♖ad1

If 20 ♖ae1, the simple 20...♗d7 is possible, although 20...♗xh3!? seems playable too.

20...♗d7 21 ♕h4 ♗a4!?

"When you see a good move, look for a better one" is a famous dictum of Lasker's. Here he seeks an improved version of the straightforward line 21...♘xd3! 22 ♖xd3 ♗b5 23 ♖b3 d3+ 24 ♔h2 ♕c5 25 ♖c1 ♕xd5 26 ♗f6 ♖e2!. Lasker apparently did not appreciate how helpless White would be in that case, and his 'improvement' allows White to muddy the waters to some degree.

22 ♗xg6?

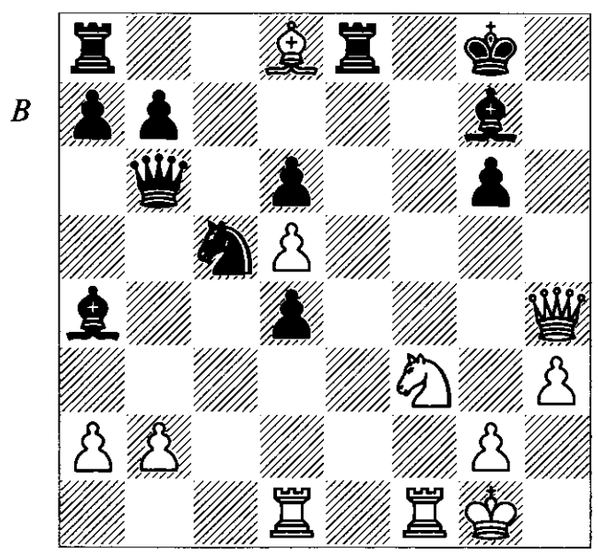
Marshall doesn't defend with the same resilience as Lasker. After 22 b3 ♘xd3 23 bxa4 (now after 23 ♖xd3? ♗b5 there is no 24 ♖b3, this being one of the ideas behind 21...♗a4) 23...♘c5 Black has the advantage but White is still fighting.

22 ♖d2 is also insufficient: 22...♘xd3 23 ♖xd3 ♗c2 24 ♖d2 d3+, followed by 25...♖e2.

22...hxg6 23 ♗d8 *(D)*

This was the idea: White wants to play 24 ♘g5 with tempo but Black has enough defensive resources.

Also inadequate was 23 ♗f6 ♗xd1 24 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 25 ♘g5 ♗h5.



23...♕xd8

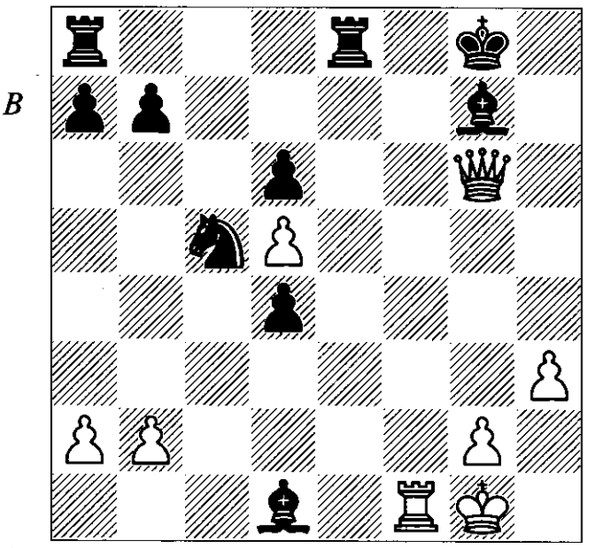
It is not clear whether it was better to interpolate 23...♖e4!? 24 g4! before playing 24...♕xd8.

24 ♘g5 ♕xg5!

Forced, but Black gets enough material for the queen, and the passed pawn on d4 will be very important.

25 ♕xg5 ♗xd1 26 ♕xg6 *(D)*

With the threat of 27 ♖f7. How should Black defend? If 26...♖f8, there would follow 27 ♖xd1



♖f6 28 ♕g4, and after the fall of the d4-pawn White would no longer be clearly worse, either materially or positionally.

26...♗c2!!

With this deflection Black thwarts all dangers and exploits his passed pawn with tempo.

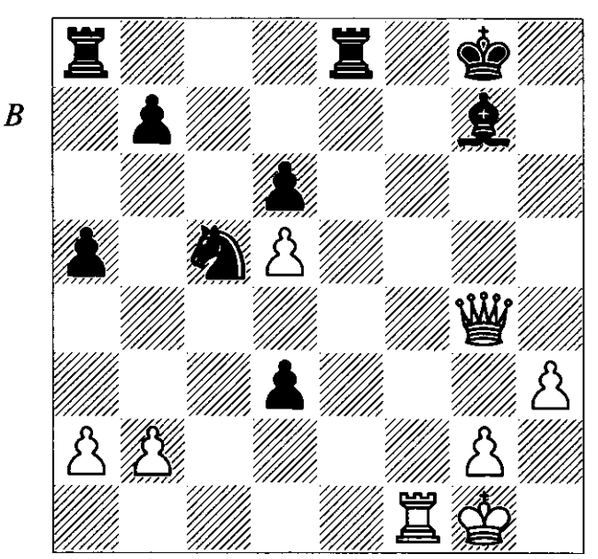
27 ♕xc2 d3 28 ♕d1

If 28 ♕f2, then simplification by 28...♖f8 wins.

28...a5!

Strengthening the c5-knight, and thus providing decisive support to the passed pawn on d3.

29 ♕g4 *(D)*



29...♖f8!

Not giving any respite – since White cannot exchange rooks, Black brings his a8-rook into play with tempo.

30 ♖d1 ♖ae8 31 ♕g6 ♖e2

With the threats 32...♖ff2 and 32...d2, against which there is no defence.

32 ♖f1 d2 33 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 34 ♕xd6+ ♔g8 35 ♕d8+ ♔h7 36 ♕h4+ ♗h6 0-1

Lasker's inaccurate 8...♗f8?! and Marshall's energetic play – 9 ♘g5!, 10 f4! and 12 f5 – left Black in dire straits.

The fight took a similar turn to Game 1 and once more Lasker didn't consider passive play. He went for complications with a risky move – 13...c5?!. As in the previous game, it had a refutation but from a practical the point of view it was not easy to find, with the wide range of possibilities that the position offered.

The error 15 h3? vindicated Lasker: from that point onwards he seized control of the game, neutralized White's attack and won with elegance, giving another display of his great tactical vision – 24...♕xg5!, 26...♗c2!!.

Game 3

Emanuel Lasker – Siegbert Tarrasch

Mährisch-Ostrau 1923

Alekhine Defence, Four Pawns Attack

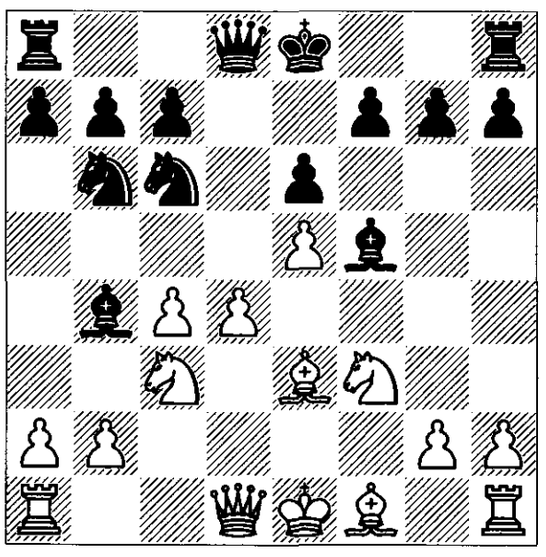
On this occasion, playing White, Lasker ends up in a more than dubious position after an automatic reply on move 10 that turned out to be a bad move.

1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 c4 ♘b6 4 d4 d6 5 f4 dxe5 6 fxe5 ♘c6 7 ♗e3

White must be careful with his move-order to give his strong pawn-centre the support it requires. The natural 7 ♘f3? is wrong because it allows the sortie 7...♗g4. White can then try the pawn sacrifice 8 e6 to avoid the type of position we see later in the main game, but it still isn't very satisfactory for him.

7...♗f5 8 ♘c3 e6 9 ♘f3 ♗b4 *(D)*

9...♘b4, 9...♕d7, 9...♗g4 and 9...♗e7 are more common moves. The text-move was a novelty at the time and Lasker replies somewhat mechanically with a serious error.



10 ♗d3?

10 ♗e2 is more adequate.

10...♗g4!

The d4-pawn is under immediate threat, and this apparent loss of time brings about a transposition to a similar position to ones that could ensue after 7 ♘f3?.

Black's position was not yet ready for the aggressive 10...♘a4? due to 11 ♗xf5! ♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♗xc3+ 13 ♔f2 ♗xa1 (Black should reconcile himself to 13...exf5 14 ♖c1 ♗b2 {it is worse to allow a protected passed pawn on d6 after 14...♗a5? 15 d5 ♘e7 16 ♕a4+ c6 17 ♖hd1} 15 ♖b1 f4 16 ♖xb2 fxe3+ 17 ♔xe3 0-0 18 ♔f2, followed by ♖e1, when White's strong centre gives him the advantage) 14 ♗e4 ♗c3 15 ♕b3 ♗a5 16 ♕xb7, and White wins material.

11 ♗e2

A difficult move – it is always awkward to acknowledge a mistake, but not for Lasker.

It is not possible to continue developing: after 11 0-0? Black can capture the d-pawn without major risks by 11...♘xd4 12 ♗xd4 ♗xf3 13 ♕xf3 ♕xd4+ 14 ♔h1, and here 14...0-0 is playable. But the strongest continuation is to stay out of the pressure that the king would be under on the kingside, and activate another piece by 14...0-0-0!, when White doesn't get enough compensation for the two pawns. After 15 ♖ad1 ♕xe5 White cannot play 16 ♕xf7? ♖hf8; for instance, 17 ♖de1 ♖xf7 18 ♖xe5 ♖xd3 19 ♖xf7 ♗xc3, winning.

The situation is similar after the inclusion of the moves 11 a3 ♗e7 and now 12 0-0? ♘xd4.

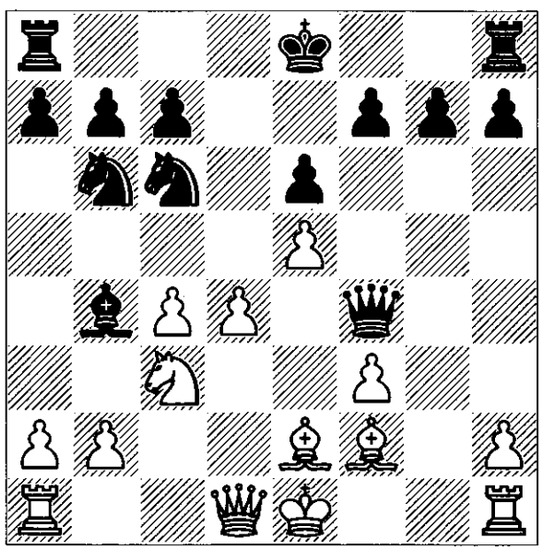
11...♗xf3! 12 gxf3

The justification for this sad capture is that 12 ♗xf3? doesn't work due to 12...♘xc4.

12...♕h4+

Black exploits the weakening of the structure and the lack of development White has suffered when creating his pawn-centre.

13 ♗f2 ♕f4 *(D)*



The threat is 14...0-0-0, when White's centre is on the brink of collapse. The placement of the black queen on f4 prevents White from castling queenside, so the d4-pawn is particularly weak.

14 ♕b3? doesn't improve the situation: after 14...♗e7 15 ♘b5 0-0-0, Black threatens 16...a6, capturing the d4-pawn.

The d-pawn could be strengthened after 14 a3 ♗xc3+ 15 bxc3, but in exchange for doubled pawns. After both the simple 15...0-0-0 and the more complex 15...♘a5 Black has good play.

The passive-looking 14 ♕c1!? holds because after 14...♕xc1+ 15 ♖xc1 ♘a4 16 a3 ♘xc3, White has 17 bxc3! since 17...♗xa3 is met by 18 ♖b1 and c5 if Black saves the b7-pawn.

14 ♖g1!?

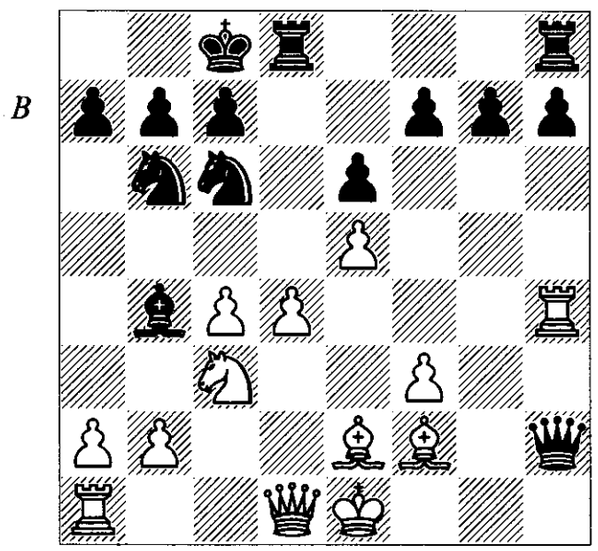
Is this objectively the best? It is not clear. Had White wanted more safety perhaps he might have played 14 a3 or 14 ♕c1. With this pawn sacrifice White complicates the game. In quiet analysis at home this wouldn't be the most advisable but Lasker considered that the risks were worth it at the board because he reached a very complex game with many possibilities for both sides – chances, therefore, of going wrong too. He always considered the practical point of view.

14...0-0-0

Tartakower suggested 14...h5, ruling out the possibility of ♖g4, but this developing move, putting more pressure on d4, is at the very least equally strong.

15 ♖g4 ♕xh2 16 ♖h4 *(D)*

And the pawn sacrifice becomes a reality. It was not possible – neither was it Lasker's idea – to play 16 ♖xg7? ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♕h4+, followed by 18...♖xd4.



And now? What would Lasker have played if he were Black?

16...♕g2

Perhaps he would also have chosen this good and natural move, but in all certainty he would have considered 16...♕xh4! 17 ♗xh4 ♖xd4 18 ♕b3 ♖xh4, with rook, knight and two pawns for the queen, as well as a better structure and a passed pawn, and the white pawns being weak to boot. After 19 0-0-0 one possibility is 19...♗c5, in order to meet 20 ♘e4 by 20...♗d4. This queen sacrifice would have been promising too.

17 ♗f1 ♕g5 18 ♕c2

Avoiding the threat of 18...♘xe5.

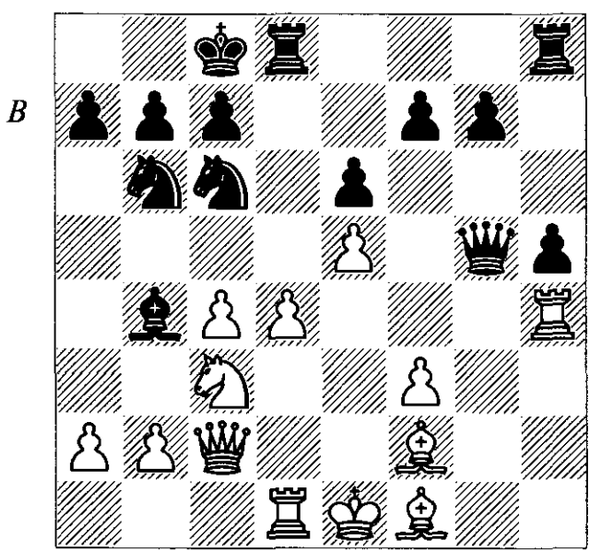
18...h5!

Black has the advantage. White has activated his rook and protected his most important pawn, the one on d4, but at the expense of a pawn and with his king having to remain in the centre, which doesn't allow for good coordination.

With the text-move Black neutralizes White's most active piece, preventing ♖g4 by pushing his passed pawn, and at the same time he begins a sound regrouping.

Another idea is to try to exploit the situation of the white king. He could have entered a tactical duel by opening up the game with 18...f6 but right now it doesn't look promising. After 19 ♖g4 (not 19 f4? ♘xd4!) 19...♕h6 20 a3! ♗xc3+ 21 ♕xc3 White has more space and activity, the two bishops almost making up for the pawn.

19 ♖d1 *(D)*



19...♕h6

Preparing the strong manoeuvre ...♗e7-g5, with the idea of exchanging, not the c3-knight, but the dark-squared bishop, which protects so many vital points.

The alternative, now with more reason than on the previous move, was 19...f6.

20 a3 ♗e7 21 ♖h3 ♗g5

Tartakower again recommended the break 21...f6.

22 ♕e4

Defending the dark squares, threatened by the exchange 22...♗e3.

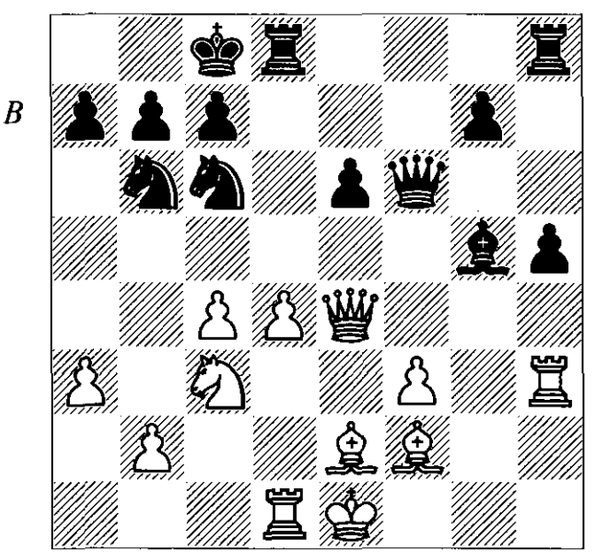
22...f6

Black has more than one tempting possibility: opening up the game as in the game, as well as the annoying tactical finesse 22...♗c1!, threatening to capture on b2, with the idea of meeting 23 ♕c2 by 23...♗e3. If 23 ♕e2, which gets in the way of the other pieces and leaves the queen in an awkward position, Black can play the quiet 23...♔b8, when it's hard to see what White can do. More questionable is 23...♖d7?!, very logically trying to increase the pressure on d4, but here tactics are more important than apparent logic, and the position becomes complicated after 24 d5!; for instance, 24...♘a5 (24...exd5?! is not convincing: 25 cxd5 ♘e7 26 ♗xb6 axb6 27 ♕c2 ♗e3 28 ♕a4) 25 ♗xb6 axb6 26 ♕c2 ♗f4 27 b4.

23 exf6 ♕xf6

If 23...♗xf6, there follows 24 ♗e3, keeping the game complex.

24 ♗e2 *(D)*



What should Black do? Unlike Lasker, whose moves in this phase of the game are almost always the strongest without argument, as well as more or less forced, Black yet again has several options:

1) Exchanging queens with 24...♕f5.

2) Strengthening the position with the prophylactic 24...♔b8.

3) Manoeuvring with 24...♘e7, trying to activate the knight on f5 or g6.

24...♕f5?

"Lasker has psychologically speculated with success. Black quickly accepts the kind invitation to this routine exchange, which seemingly offers him a clear plus in theory, without the need of embarking on one of the more complicated lines; but this constitutes a wholly mistaken concept of the position. On the contrary, in this way it will be impossible to reach an endgame in which the pawns are pushed automatically. Black's kingside pawn-majority remains

paralysed and White gets excellent chances thanks to his once-again powerful centre and his pair of agile bishops." (Tartakower).

It could be added that White must find a tactical manoeuvre allowing him to support his centre instead of weakening it.

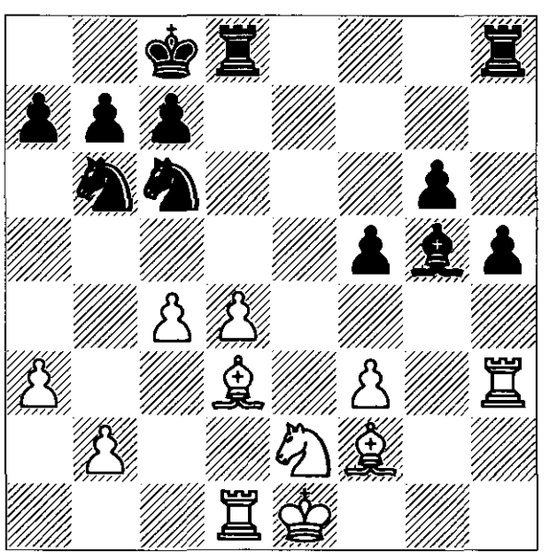
25 ♕xf5 exf5

Black was planning 26...♗f6, and of course he wasn't afraid of White pushing his centre prematurely with 26 d5, having 26...♘e5 at his disposal.

26 ♗d3!

This manoeuvre allows White to support the centre in order to push it later on, when the knights have no good squares to move to. Then the push will be favourable.

26...g6 27 ♘e2 *(D)*



27...h4

Avoiding 28 ♖g3. Black would prefer to keep his rook on the h-file to retain the option of pushing the pawn, but 27...♖he8, pinning the e2-knight and preventing f4, was worth considering. Then neither 28 ♔f1? ♘a4 29 ♖b1 ♗e3, nor 28 ♖g3? ♗h4 29 ♖xg6 ♘xd4 is good. 28 b3 is better, when after 28...♔b8 29 ♔f1 ♗e3 Black has neutralized White's strong bishop-pair.

28 f4

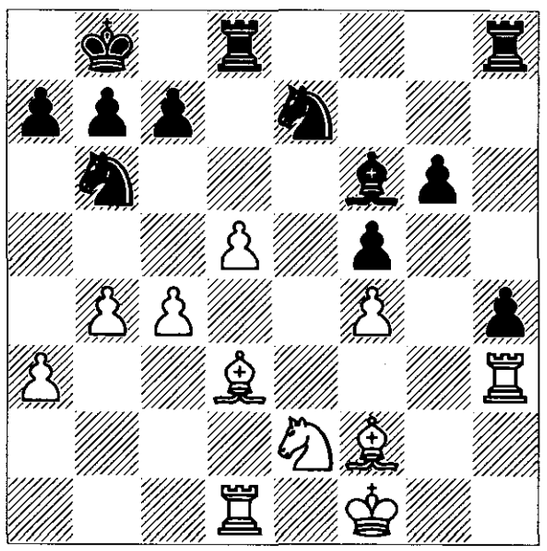
Now the e5-square is under control.

28...♗f6 29 b4! ♔b8

The position has radically changed: White's centre is strong and he prepares the best way to advance it. Of course the d4-pawn is indirectly protected: 29...♘xd4? 30 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 31 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 32 ♗xf5+ and 33 ♖xd4.

Now the pawn is under threat but White advances it without any qualms.

30 d5 ♘e7 31 ♔f1 *(D)*



The king is heading across to control Black's passed pawn. Black is now faced again with a great range of options.

31...♘bc8?!

Black unnecessarily retreats to a passive position. The intention is to neutralize the centre with a timely ...c6, but this is not a good idea.

The immediate 31...c6?! was not convincing due to 32 d6! ♖xd6 33 c5 ♖xd3 34 ♖hxd3 ♘bd5, and as Tartakower indicated, despite Black having two pawns for the exchange, with 35 b5 White would have two files, b- and d-, for his rooks.

31...♘a4! is stronger, with the same idea as in the game but with the difference that 32...♘b2 is threatened. The passive 32 ♖c1? is strongly met by 32...c6!. Best is 32 ♗d4 with a complex game after, for instance, 32...♗xd4 33 ♘xd4 ♘b2 (or 33...c6 34 ♘e6 ♖d6?! 35 ♘g5) 34 ♖d2 ♘xd3 35 ♖dxd3, when Black's extra pawn isn't felt at all and is in danger of being recaptured.

32 b5!

'Prophylactic thinking' – this move is better than 32 ♘d4, after which Black can carry out his idea by 32...c6 33 ♘e6 ♖d7 34 ♘c5 ♖d6.

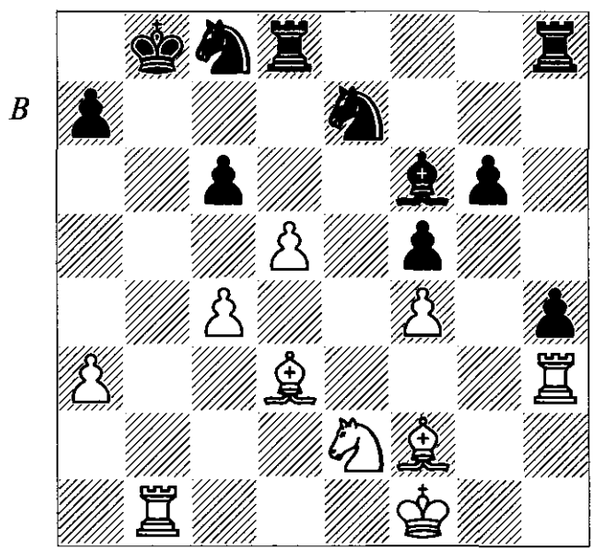
32...c6?

Black buckles under the tension and White gains activity. 32...♘d6 is better, when after 33 ♘d4 the fight is still on: White has points of entry, such as e6, and the extra pawn is still not so important.

33 bxc6

Of course it is the b-file that White needs to open.

33...bxc6 34 ♖b1+ *(D)*



34...♔a8

The king defends the a7-pawn and is for the time being less exposed than after 34...♔c7? 35 ♘d4! ♗xd4 36 ♗xd4 ♖h7? 37 ♗e5+ ♔d7 38 ♖b7+ ♔e8 39 dxc6, winning back the pawn with total control of the board.

35 ♘d4! ♗xd4

35...cxd5 is the alternative:

a) 36 cxd5 is possible, as the black king can't stand the attack of all the white pieces after 36...♖xd5? 37 ♘e6 ♖d7 38 ♗e2 ♘b6 39 ♗f3+ ♘bd5 40 ♗c5. However, 36...♖d7 is better, when the position is not so clear.

b) The engines' suggestion 36 c5! seems even better, threatening 36 ♘e6 and 37 c6, so 36...♗xd4 is practically forced, but the two white bishops command the game after 37 ♗xd4 ♖h7 38 ♗f6.

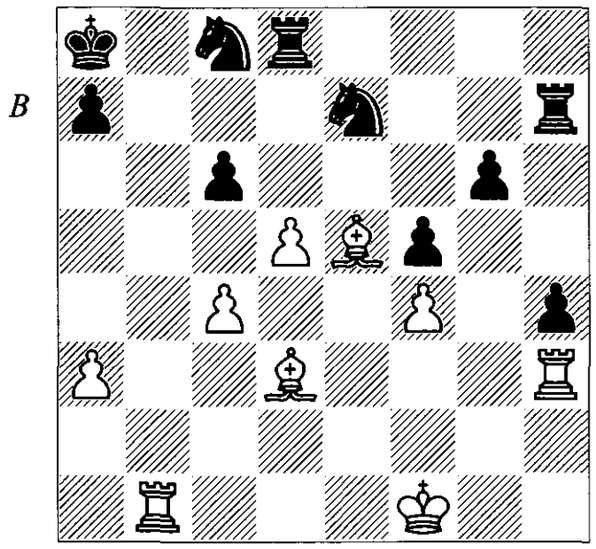
36 ♗xd4 ♖h7 37 ♗e5 *(D)*

37...♘d6

37...a5 was suggested as the best defence, but the black king cannot be protected against the siege of the two rooks and the two bishops: 38 ♖b8+ ♔a7 39 ♗e2 cxd5 40 cxd5 ♖xd5 41 ♖hb3 ♘c6 42 ♗f3.

38 c5 ♘b7

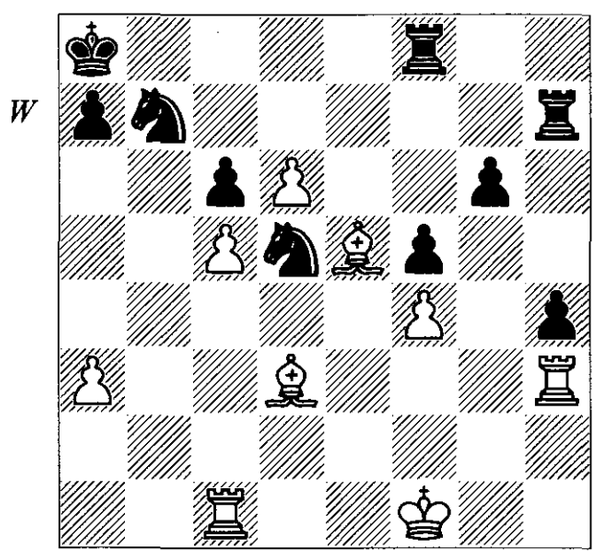
The d6-pawn will secure White's victory – there is no defence. If 38...♘e4, then 39 ♗xe4 fxe4 40 ♖hb3 a5 41 ♖b7! cxd5 42 ♖1b6 (42 ♗b8 ♘f5 43 ♖7b6! ♖xb8 44 ♖xb8+ ♔a7 45



♖8b5 ♔a6 46 c6 also wins) 42...h3 43 ♖c7 and White wins.

39 d6 ♘d5 40 ♖c1 ♖f8 *(D)*

In the event of 40...♘a5 Black is virtually paralysed: White must only control the h4-pawn with 41 ♔g1 and then conclude matters with an attack using all his pieces.



41 ♗a6 ♘f6 42 ♗xf6!

"Wrapping up the position." Lasker could also play like Capablanca – this is the quickest way to infiltrate and convert the passed pawn.

42...♖xf6 43 ♖e3 ♖f8 44 ♖ce1 ♖hh8 45 d7 ♔b8 46 ♖e8+ ♔c7 47 ♗xb7 1-0

Lasker's mistake in the opening – 10 ♗d3? – made him lose the advantage of the first move and more. However, instead of 'drying up' the position to try to solve his problems, he once more complicated the game to the maximum. After 14 ♖g1!? the position sharpened

tremendously, creating many possibilities for both players, including chances for his opponent to go wrong, which is always an important practical factor. Tarrasch's error came – 24...♕f5? – with the wrong evaluation of the endgame. While Lasker kept on making almost always the best moves, his opponent gradually lost his grip on the position, with the passive 31...♘bc8?! and with the opening of the game, which was very beneficial for White, by 32...c6?.

Tartakower's observation holds still true: "Lasker had to fight both his opponent and his own mistake. It was necessary, therefore, to find the best moves in order to come out of the struggle successfully."

Lasker was a trailblazer in discovering the relative value of the pieces. The sacrifice carried out in the next game was misunderstood by his contemporaries but time has proved Lasker right.

Game 4

Alexander Ilyin-Zhenevsky – Emanuel Lasker

Moscow 1925

Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation

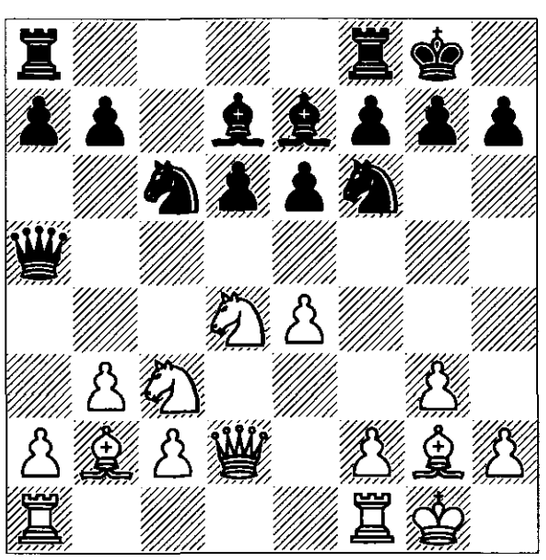
1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 e6 3 ♘f3 d6 4 g3 ♘f6 5 ♗g2 ♗e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 b3

It was early days in the theory of this opening. This manoeuvre of b3 and ♗b2, before playing d4, was tried several times.

7...♘c6

Lasker used to delay the development of the queen's knight until it was clear which of the two paths, c6 or d7, was to be preferred.

8 ♗b2 ♗d7 9 d4 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♕a5 11 ♕d2 *(D)*



B

11...♖ac8

We reach a type of position which decades later – and even today – is considered standard. One of Black's achievements is that he has a half-open file. He occupies it in the most natural way, considering that the f8-rook has more options than the a8-rook.

The alternative was 11...♖fc8, although after 12 ♖ad1 the move 12...a6?! is inadvisable due to 13 ♘d5! ♕xd2 14 ♘xe7+, when the d6-pawn is a weakness. Black should probably play 12...♘xd4 13 ♕xd4 a6.

12 ♖ad1 ♔h8

An odd-looking move which is seldom played nowadays in this type of position. The reason is that against a logical move such as 12...♖fd8? there follows the thematic tactical blow 13 ♘d5!, when Black is in serious trouble; for instance, 13...♕xd2 14 ♘xe7+ ♔f8 15 ♖xd2 ♔xe7 16 ♘b5 ♘e8 17 ♗a3, and the weak d6-pawn falls.

12...♘xd4?! has been suggested as a better option, with the idea 13 ♕xd4 e5; for instance, 14 ♕d3 ♗g4 15 f3 ♗e6 or 14 ♕d2 ♕c5 (again not 14...a6? due to 15 ♘d5) with reasonable play. However, White has the surprising 13 ♘d5!, when the d6-pawn will yet again become a weakness after the capture of the e7-bishop.

13 ♘ce2! *(D)*

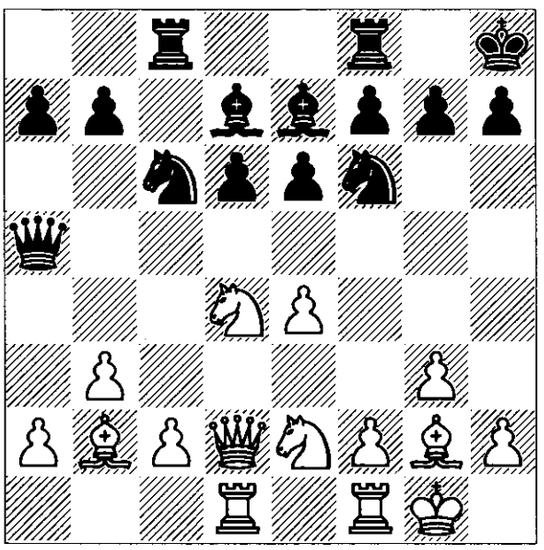
An interesting decision. White's usual theatre of operation is the kingside but the direct 13 f4? is wrong due to 13...♘xd4 14 ♕xd4 d5.

Forcing Black to retreat by 13 ♘db5 ♘e8 before playing 14 f4?! is also poor because

Black can react with 14...a6 15 ♘d4 ♘xd4 16 ♕xd4 d5.

In order to play f4, a preparatory move like 13 ♔h1 seems necessary but Black can reply 13...♘xd4 14 ♕xd4 e5, followed by ...♗e6, at once or after ...♗g4.

In all these lines one can see that the placement of the queen's bishop on b2 instead of e3 has its weak points too.



Here Lasker sank into deep thought. Any retreat by the queen like 13...♕b6 would be met by 14 c4, reaching a Maroczy formation considered dubious for Black. Neither does the endgame after 13...♕xd2 14 ♖xd2 look very attractive: Black has a playable position but his chances of victory are practically nil.

13...♕xa2!!

A move that was misunderstood at the time, and about which much was speculated and written. Objectively, it is a very good move. It is an even better move when the emotions and the nature of the players are taken into consideration.

Lasker shows here just how ahead he was of his contemporaries in the evaluation of the resulting position. A rook, bishop and pawn are worth just a bit less than the queen but Black's position is healthy and he is in very little risk of losing.

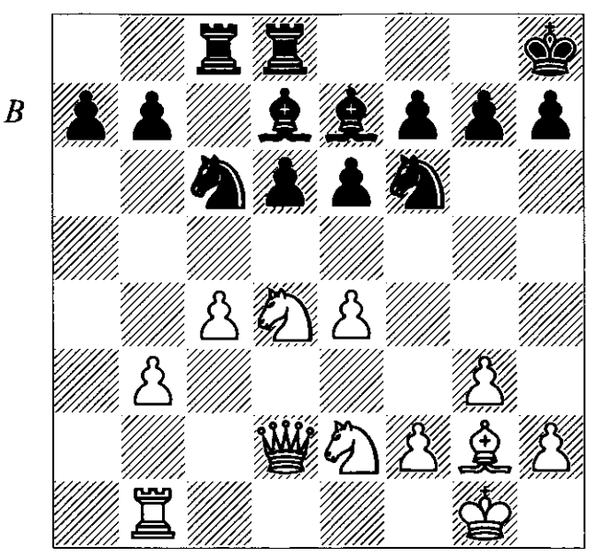
Euwe's comment is interesting: "Anyone who really knows his play will realize that Lasker is choosing this line of play purposely. Better than any other player, Lasker understood human nature.

"After this move Black's position is very sound. White's material advantage certainly gives him the better chances, but against this must be weighed the fact that the queen sacrifice will upset White's equilibrium. He is sure to think that Lasker has made a bad blunder, and so will feel bound to play for a win."

14 ♖a1 ♕xb2 15 ♖fb1 ♕xb1+ 16 ♖xb1

"I have to admit that even now I do not understand this combination and share the opinion of Bogoljubow, who wrote in his notes to the game that Black has run grave risks of losing by this sacrifice. At the time I thought Lasker had blundered – and the other players, including Bogoljubow, held the same opinion. This thought really set me going. Just think. The day before I had beaten Capablanca, and today I was winning against Lasker. Things were really going my way! So I started playing sharply, partly because I was in time-trouble" (Ilyin-Zhenevsky).

16...♖fd8 17 c4 *(D)*



17...♘e8

Kasparov points out that after 17...a6 18 ♘c2 ♘b8 19 ♖d1 b5 20 ♘e3 bxc4 21 ♘xc4 White has some advantage. It is evident that with the opening up of the game the white pieces find useful squares and that is not what Lasker was looking for when he sacrificed the queen.

Black is in no rush to sharpen the game. Instead of seeking a quick ...b5, he rather 'cedes the turn' to his opponent to see what he does. He prefers to manoeuvre in muddy waters before clarifying the game. Since the inactive f6-knight

is neither very useful nor needed on the kingside, he takes it to the queenside.

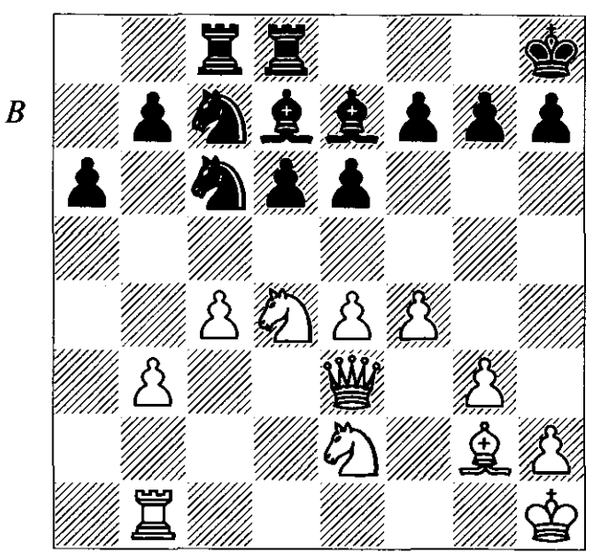
18 f4?!

Proving Lasker right. This move was criticized by Bogoljubow in the tournament book. White unnecessarily weakens his position.

White should get rid of the 'superfluous piece', as Dvoretsky calls the situation when two pieces have the same ideal destination. In this case both white knights have the d4-square as their best post. Therefore 18 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 19 ♘d4 was a better option.

18...a6 19 ♔h1 ♘c7 20 ♕e3 *(D)*

White doesn't change the structure either. Kasparov points out the alternative 20 ♘xc6!? bxc6 21 ♕a5 c5 22 ♖d1, but there is nothing seriously wrong with the move chosen by White.



20...♖b8

Another possibility mentioned by Kasparov was to take concrete measures by 20...♘xd4!? 21 ♕xd4 b5 22 ♕a7 e5, with counterplay, but Lasker prefers to keep waiting with elastic moves, luring White into stepping over the safety line when he gets too confident of his apparently superior game.

21 ♖d1 ♘b4!?

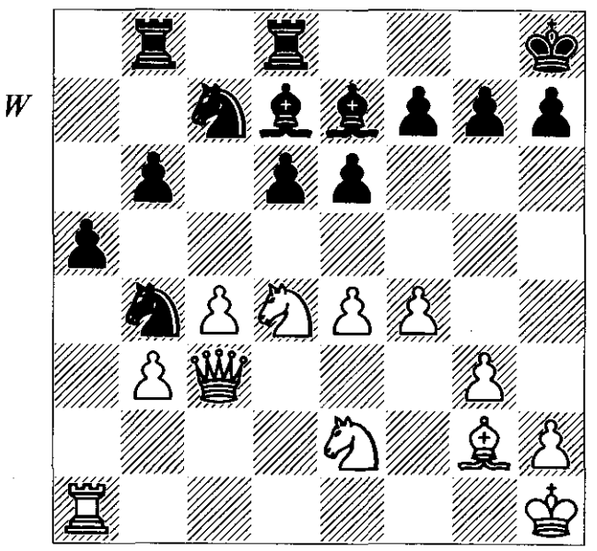
Black feinted to play ...b5 but now he changes plans and occupies the weak point b4 instead.

22 ♕c3 a5 23 ♖a1?!

Losing the thread. The rook is doing nothing on a1 and is dangerously placed on the a1-h8 diagonal, creating a tactical weakness.

23 ♘c2 ♘ca6 24 ♗f3 is correct, as indicated by Kasparov.

23...b6 *(D)*



Once the pawn is protected, Black's plan is 24...♗f6.

24 ♕e3??

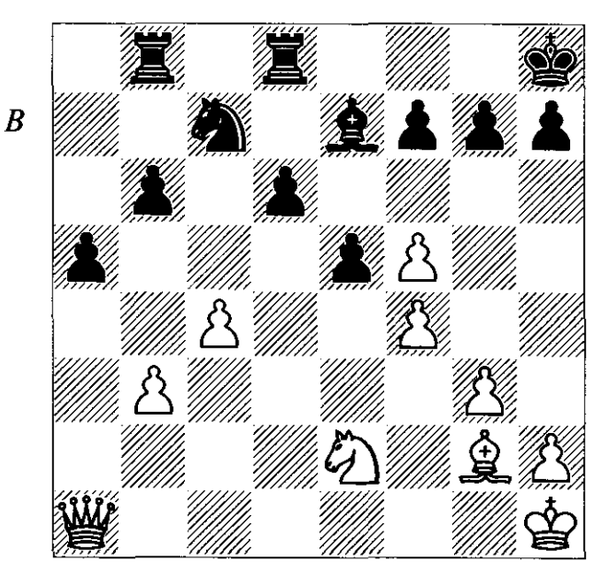
White doesn't stand the tension and makes a decisive mistake.

24 ♖d1 is better. Black can reply 24...♖bc8 or 24...♗f6, going back to the idea of a timely break with ...b5.

24...e5! 25 ♘f5

25 fxe5 dxe5 26 ♘f5 ♗xf5 27 exf5 ♘c2 28 ♕xe5 ♗f6! 29 ♕xc7 ♘xa1 30 ♗d5 ♘xb3 31 ♕xf7 a4 doesn't save the game either – the passed pawn decides.

25...♗xf5 26 exf5 ♘c2 27 ♕c3 ♘xa1 28 ♕xa1 *(D)*



The two rooks are much better than the queen. In a few moves Black will activate his pieces and the extra pawn will have a decisive

effect. White's weakness on his back two ranks also doesn't help.

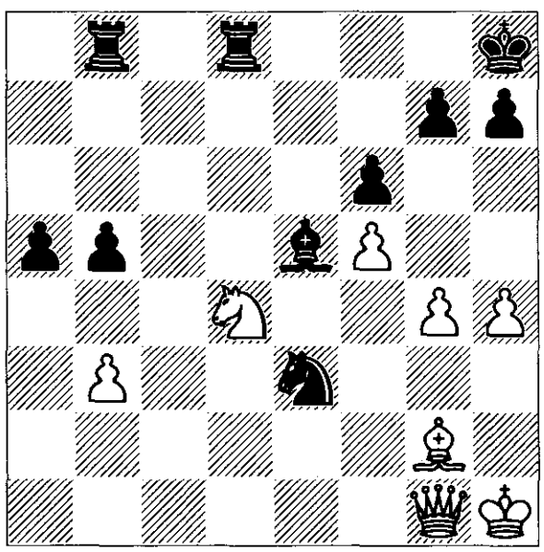
28...♗f6 29 ♕g1 d5!

The passive c7-knight is activated, as is the d8-rook.

30 cxd5 ♘xd5 31 fxe5 ♗xe5 32 g4 f6 33 h4 b5

With the creation of a passed pawn, White's position deteriorates even further.

34 ♘d4 ♘e3! *(D)*



This simplification makes Black's task easier.

35 ♕xe3 ♖xd4 36 ♗f3 a4 37 h5 a3 38 ♕e2 ♖bd8 0-1

"That is how you are punished when you get carried away by success." (Ilyin-Zhenevsky).

Drawn by his wish to win assuming whatever risks necessary, Lasker carried out a queen sacrifice – 13...♕xa2!! – of a type not appreciated at the time, but which nowadays is a standard resource at master level. Lasker showed how far ahead he was of his contemporaries in the evaluation of the resulting position. There are also psychological elements explaining the game's final result. Black didn't end up badly off from a material perspective – he got only a little less than the queen's worth. He didn't get any advantage either, but he did radically change the character of the struggle. Instead of playing an endgame with a slight advantage and without any risk of losing, White thought he was in a winning position. His thoughts were more on his victory over Capablanca the day before, and the prospects of another spectacular triumph over Lasker, as indicated by Ilyin-Zhenevsky himself, so he couldn't resist the tension of the struggle.

Lasker kept manoeuvring – 17...♘e8, 18...a6, 20...♖b8 – before adopting a more active approach with 21...♘b4!?, which White met by a weak move – 23 ♖a1?! – followed by a serious blunder – 24 ♕e3?? – and from that point on Lasker didn't let up.

If there was any doubt that "Lasker played the person" (Capablanca), this game is clear proof of it.

2 Refuting Premature Attacks

In this chapter we shall look at examples where a premature attack – whether it involves a material sacrifice or positional concessions – is repelled.

The fact that the attack is objectively premature or incorrect doesn't mean it isn't dangerous. And indeed, when facing an attack over the board, it is difficult to know for sure whether it actually is justified or not. An appropriate response is essential whenever the opponent chooses to attack us.

Before tackling Game 5 in depth, let's see a preliminary example that is related to it in a number of ways. It's a classic game where the attack is sound and Black didn't find the best defence.

Supplementary Game 5.1

Mikhail Botvinnik – Svetozar Gligorić

Moscow Olympiad 1956

English Opening, Symmetrical Variation

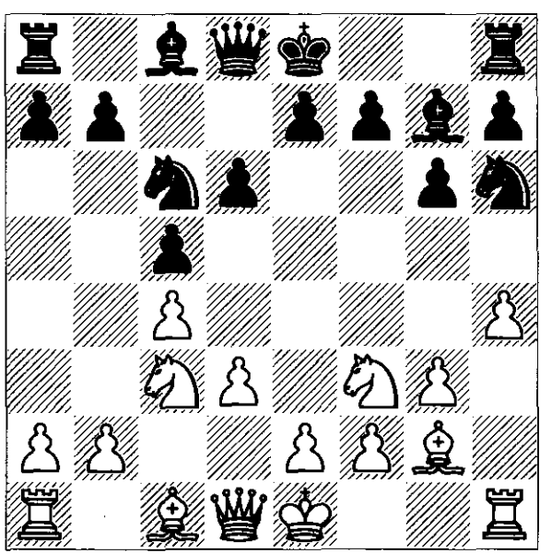
1 c4 g6 2 g3 c5 3 ♗g2 ♗g7 4 ♘c3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♘h6

This deployment of the knight to the edge is playable. It has been occasionally used by Spassky, Anand, Topalov and other top players, but it contains some risk.

6 h4!

Trying to punish immediately the main drawback of the black knight's position. Unlike when it's on f6, it doesn't control the h5-square and, by blocking the h7-pawn, it also makes it impossible to counter White's push with ...h5.

6...d6 7 d3 *(D)*



White has delayed for one moment the advance h5. How is Black to reply?

Botvinnik indicates that the thrust couldn't be stopped by 7...♗g4 because follows 8 h5! anyway. Then 8...gxh5 leaves Black's structure badly damaged, while 8...♗xh5? loses material to 9 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 10 g4.

7...♖b8?!

Black ignores White's demonstration on the kingside and plans to counterattack on the queenside. He doesn't consider it important that he is giving up the possibility of castling on that flank.

This is in contradiction with the concept of 'prophylactic thinking', that is, always to ask oneself what the opponent is planning, so as then to combine the pursuit of one's own plans with the neutralization of the opponent's most dangerous ideas.

Seeing what happens on the h-file in the game, it appears more reasonable to reduce White's superiority on the kingside, one possibility being 7...♘f5.

Another solution, bearing some resemblance to the game, is 7...♗f5. Moreno Merediz-Reshevsky, Nice Olympiad 1974 then continued 8 h5 ♕d7 9 ♗xh6? ♗xh6 10 hxg6 hxg6 11 ♕c1

♗g7 12 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8, and the opening of the h-file didn't get White anywhere. If 13 ♕h6, then there follows 13...0-0-0, and it is Black who is in a better position to exploit it.

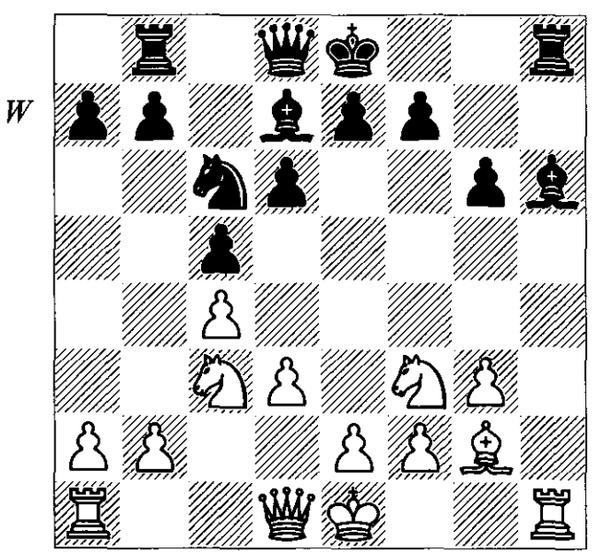
8 h5 ♗d7?!

Black continues to prepare the ...b5 break, but since he won't be able to carry it out, his last two moves turn out to be either passive or a waste of time, only worsening Black's position.

Botvinnik suggested 8...f6 as the lesser evil.

Everything indicates that Black's oversight was due to a tactical mistake – the result of not using the aforementioned prophylactic thinking.

9 ♗xh6! ♗xh6 10 hxg6 hxg6 *(D)*



11 ♕c1!

Unlike in Reshevsky's game, White is able to exploit the opening of the h-file. According to Botvinnik, Black had missed this blow.

11...♗g7 12 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 13 ♕h6 ♗xc3+

Keeping the bishop wouldn't solve the problems – if 13...♗f6 then 14 ♘g5, with ideas of ♘h7 or ♘ge4.

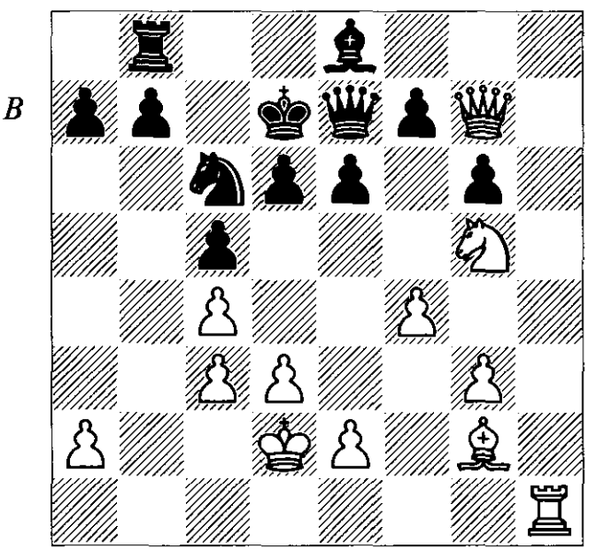
14 bxc3 e6 15 ♘g5?!

This move is inaccurate. 15 ♔d2! is a better move-order so that 15...♔e7, with the idea of playing ...♕h8, can be met by 16 ♖h1.

15...♔e7! 16 ♔d2 ♗e8?

This fails to challenge White on the kingside, which he can do by 16...♕h8 17 ♖h1 ♕xh6 18 ♖xh6 ♘d8. However, 16...♕b6! is best of all, with surprisingly serious counterplay based on 17...♘d4(+)!, which even wins after the natural 17 ♔c2?. Black is then no worse; e.g., 17 ♔c1 ♘d4 18 cxd4 ♕b4 is a draw.

17 ♕g7 ♔d7 18 f4! ♕e7 19 ♖h1 *(D)*



The triumph of White's idea begun with 6 h4! is complete. White has gained control of, and managed to infiltrate along, the h-file.

19...♘d8 20 ♘e4

Botvinnik noted that 20 ♖h7 was even more energetic, followed by 21 ♗e4, although of course White's advantage is not lost after the text-move.

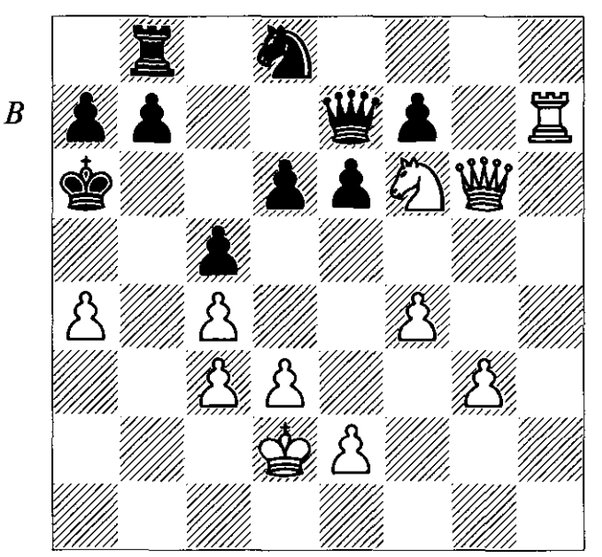
20...♔c7 21 ♖h8 ♗c6 22 ♘f6 ♔b6

If 22...♗xg2, then of course 23 ♖e8.

23 ♗xc6 ♘xc6

23...bxc6 is met by 24 ♖e8, 25 ♕f8 and then ♖e7.

24 ♖h7 ♘d8 25 ♕xg6 ♔a6 26 a4 *(D)*



26...♔a5

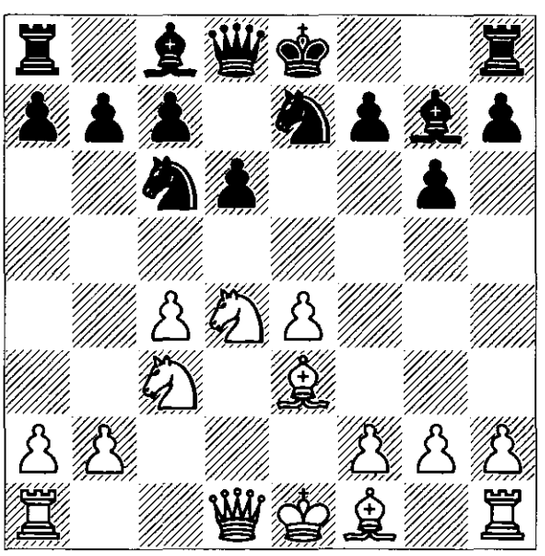
Black doesn't achieve counterplay with his lonely queen after 26...♕c7 27 ♕g8 ♕b6. Botvinnik provides the sample line 28 ♕e8 ♘c6 29

♕xf7 ♕b2+ 30 ♔e3 ♕xc3 31 ♘d7 ♕d4+ 32 ♔f3 ♖d8 33 ♘f8, winning.

27 ♕g5 ♔xa4 28 ♖h1 ♔b3 29 ♕h4 ♔b2 30 g4 1-0

The attack with h4 against the black fianchetto is a standard idea in some openings, such as the Sicilian Dragon and the Sämisch King's Indian. In both of these lines the goal is clear, since Black is already castled and White's king is still in the centre or castles on the queenside. As we have seen, the advance h4 is also not to be ruled out merely because Black hasn't yet castled, provided there is some rationale behind it. Let's see an example:

1 d4 g6 2 c4 ♗g7 3 ♘c3 d6 4 e4 e5 5 ♘ge2 exd4 6 ♘xd4 ♘c6 7 ♗e3 ♘ge7 *(D)*



This is a position known to theory. White has many options, such as 8 ♕d2 or 8 ♗e2. An important detail is that Black's king's knight has been developed to e7. The fact that it doesn't control the h5-square justifies the following advance.

8 h4!? f5

It is possible to prevent White's thrust by playing 8...h5 but at the expense of considerably weakening the dark squares on the kingside.

9 h5 fxe4

Surrendering the h-file with 9...♖f8?! is a risky decision – Anand-Mamedyarov, Moscow (blitz) 2007 went 10 hxg6 hxg6 11 ♖h7 ♖f7 12 ♖xg7!? ♖xg7 13 ♗g5, and White won quickly. Of course this is not a conclusive demonstration of the strength of the exchange sacrifice, but rather of how dangerous it is to surrender the open file in return for nothing.

10 hxg6 hxg6 11 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 12 ♘xe4 d5!?

Black deviates from the more usual continuation 12...♗f5, which leads to a complex position after 13 ♘xf5 gxf5 (better than 13...♘xf5 14 ♗g5 ♕d7 15 ♕d2, with advantage to White, Gelfand-Piket, Monte Carlo 2001) 14 ♕h5+ ♔d7 15 0-0-0 ♕g8! 16 ♘c5+ ♔c8, M.Gurevich-Speelman, Antwerp 1993, when as Kramnik points out "White has several moves that look promising but it seems that Black is OK."

The text-move, 12...d5, leads to a complex struggle. From here, the game Kramnik-Mamedyarov, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2007 ended in victory for White but this was not due to the opening.

Game 5

Laszlo Szabo – Mikhail Botvinnik

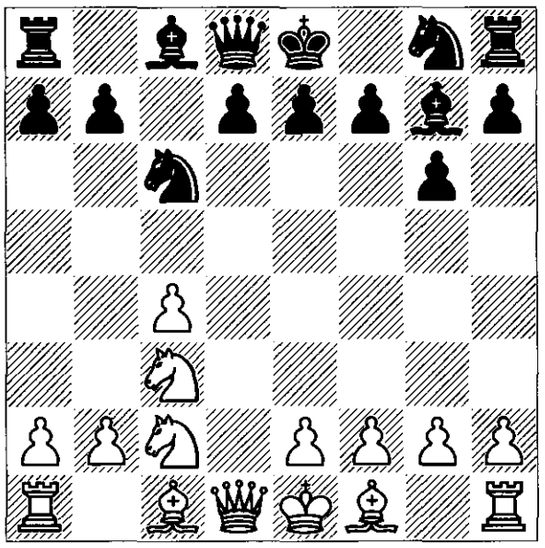
Amsterdam 1966

English/Sicilian, Maroczy Bind

1 c4 c5 2 ♘c3 g6 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 d4

This way of seeking a Maroczy Bind gives Black several attractive options. The move-order used is not the best: it is better to keep the c3-knight at home, and play ♘f3 and e4 first, since as played the knight on d4 comes under an early attack. As 'proof' of this, let's remember that after 1 c4 g6 2 ♘c3, Fischer added an exclamation mark to 2...c5! in *Informator 9* when annotating his game against Petrosian from the match USSR-Rest of the World, Belgrade 1970, in which Petrosian didn't enter the Maroczy, preferring 3 g3 instead.

4...cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♘c6 6 ♘c2 *(D)*


B

This original idea of Rubinstein's was used by Botvinnik himself with both colours (e.g., Botvinnik-Model, Leningrad 1933, Kirillov-Botvinnik, USSR Ch, Moscow 1931 and Goldberg-Botvinnik, USSR Ch, Moscow 1945) and is still valid, but not so much in this specific move-order.

In the move-order used in this game, with the knight on c3, Black has the interesting option of damaging White's structure with 6...♗xc3+, when White's bishop-pair is not to be feared precisely because the c3-pawn closes the long diagonal. Fischer himself had the opportunity of being consistent with his comment: Quinteros-Fischer, Buenos Aires 1970 continued 6...♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♘f6 8 f3 d6 9 e4 ♗e6 (beginning a quick attack on the weak pawns; if Black plays passively, White will bring his c2-knight to d5 and start advancing menacingly on the kingside) 10 ♗e2 ♖c8 11 ♘e3 ♕a5 12 ♗d2 ♘e5 13 ♕b3 ♘fd7! 14 f4 (14 ♕xb7?? loses to 14...♖b8) 14...♘c5 15 ♕c2 (after 15 ♕b5+ ♕xb5 16 cxb5 there follows 16...♘ed3+, and the f4-pawn falls) 15...♘c6 16 0-0 ♕a4!, and Black gained the advantage but later on the position got extremely complicated. Fischer won in the end nevertheless.

This is an idea also employed with the white pieces. A similar position can be reached, for instance, after 1 c4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 g3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 ♗g2 ♘c7 6 ♕b3!? ♘c6 7 ♗xc6+ bxc6 8 ♕a4, as used by Larsen, Korchnoi and Gurevich, among others. Note that here White is willing to lose a tempo with this queen in order to reach the same position that Black can achieve without this loss of time by 6...♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♕a5.

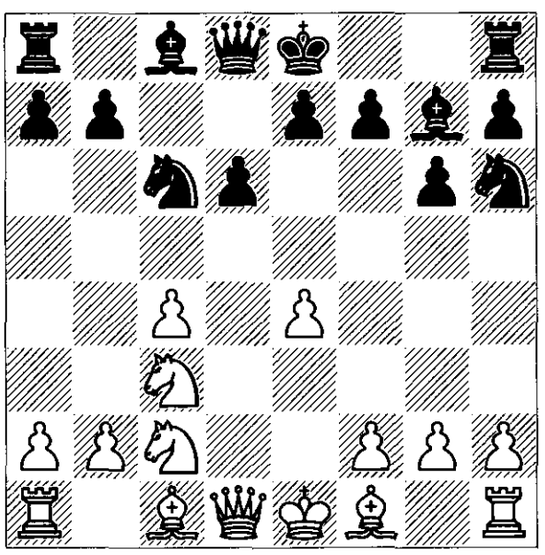
6...d6

Black prefers something quieter, exploiting another flaw in the set-up used by White.

7 e4

Now both 7...♗xc3+ and 7...♘f6, reaching more usual positions, are possible but Botvinnik chooses a third possibility.

7...♘h6 *(D)*


W

Emphasizing another drawback of entering the Maroczy line after prematurely developing the queen's knight. Black leaves open the possibility of attacking one of the pillars of the Maroczy formation, the e4-pawn, with the break ...f5.

This knight development would be dubious if we substitute the move ♗e2 for ♘c3. Then White plays 8 g4!, excluding the h6-knight from the game for some time to come.

8 h4?!

A very aggressive move, but the centre is not closed (as in Botvinnik-Gligorić) nor is it so sufficiently supported for White to develop his attack without distractions.

Both 8 ♗e2 and 8 ♗d3 are better.

8...f5!

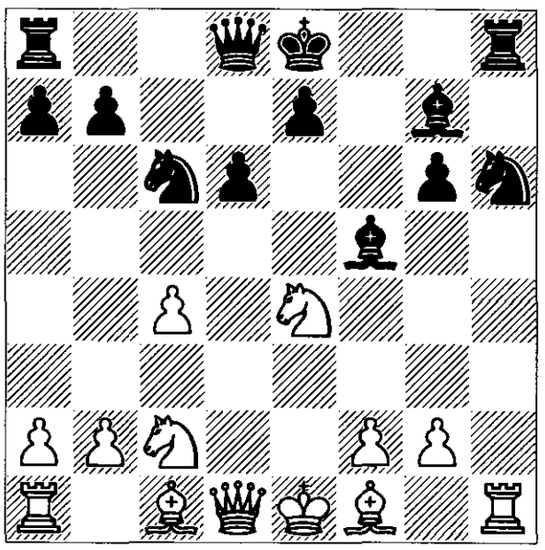
"An attack on the flank is best met by a central break" is a dictum that is quite often correct.

9 h5 fxe4 10 hxg6?!

The game shows that the opening of the h-file will not be an advantage for White. It is better to keep the tension with 10 ♘xe4.

Let's note that it is not possible to play '*à la* Botvinnik' with 10 ♗xh6? ♗xh6 11 hxg6 hxg6 12 ♕c1?, because the h1-rook is unprotected and 12...♗d2+ follows, winning.

10...hxg6 11 ♘xe4 ♗f5 *(D)*



After the skirmishes initiated by 8 h4 the only result is that more weaknesses have appeared in White's camp. The g7-bishop generates strong pressure, while White's pieces are passive and the destination of his king is uncertain.

On the other hand Black's plan is clear – develop quickly in order to castle queenside and try to exploit the opening of the h-file.

12 ♘c3?!

This allows Black to continue developing with tempo but it is not possible to give any useful advice: 12 ♗d3 is met by 12...♕d7 with the same unpleasant script for White.

Against 12 ♘g3 there are several options. Botvinnik indicated 12...♕d7, without fearing 13 ♘xf5 gxf5 14 ♕h5+? ♘f7 15 ♕g6 ♖xh1 16 ♕xg7 ♕e6+, winning.

12...♕a5!

Speeding up development with the threat of 13...♗xc3+.

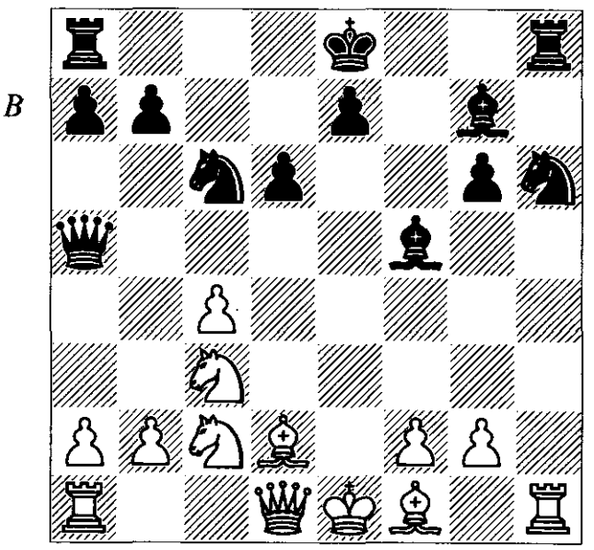
13 ♗d2 *(D)*

And now?

13...♕e5+!

Prophylactic thinking – if 13...0-0-0?!, there follows 14 ♘d5 and White comes back to life.

This is a case where the queen can become effective on a central square early in the game. The lack of coordination of the white pieces makes it impossible to attack it and win space –



the normal objection to an early centralization of the queen. Now the c3-knight is 'pinned' to the defence of the b2-pawn.

14 ♘e3 0-0-0 15 ♕a4

White plans to castle queenside and so escape the worst.

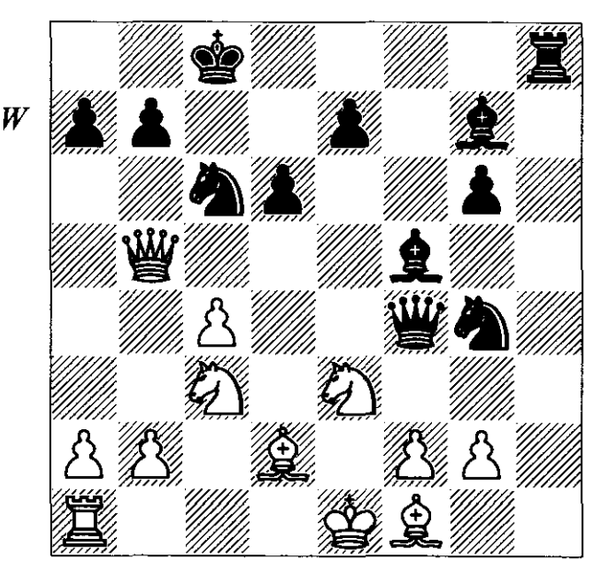
15...♘g4!

Using the h-file and tying the white king to the defence of f2.

16 ♖xh8

This exchange is necessary – 16 ♖g1? loses to 16...♕h2.

16...♖xh8 17 ♕b5 ♕f4 *(D)*



Of course it is in Black's interest to retain the queens, taking into account the position of the white king in the centre.

18 ♘cd1

Such passivity cannot lead to anything positive but 18 ♘xg4 is no good due to 18...♕xg4, with ideas of 19...♘d4 and 19...♖h1. If 18

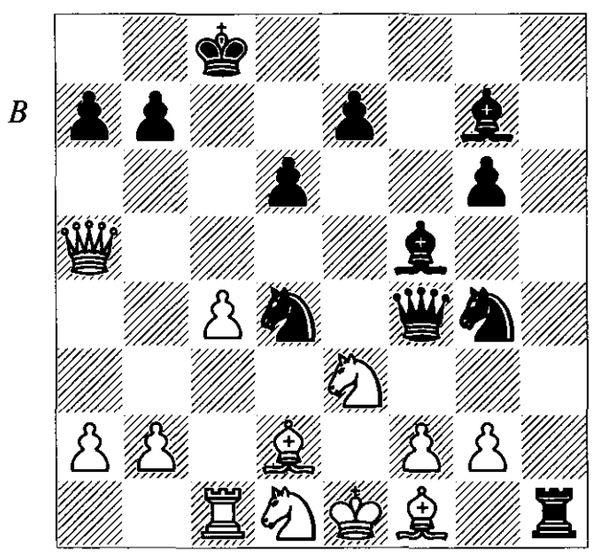
♘ed1, trying to drive away the black queen, there follows 18...♗xc3! and 19...♕e4+ with similar results.

18...♘d4 19 ♕a5 ♖h1

After these two powerful moves by Black, White's position crumbles.

20 ♖c1 *(D)*

White doesn't get any counterplay with 20 ♕xa7 – the queen alone can't do anything, and the unfortunate position of the white king, badly supported by its defenders, allows finishes such as 20...♖xf1+! 21 ♔xf1 ♗d3+ 22 ♔e1 ♕f3!! 23 ♕a8+ ♔d7 24 ♕a4+ ♔e6, and mate.



20...♘e5

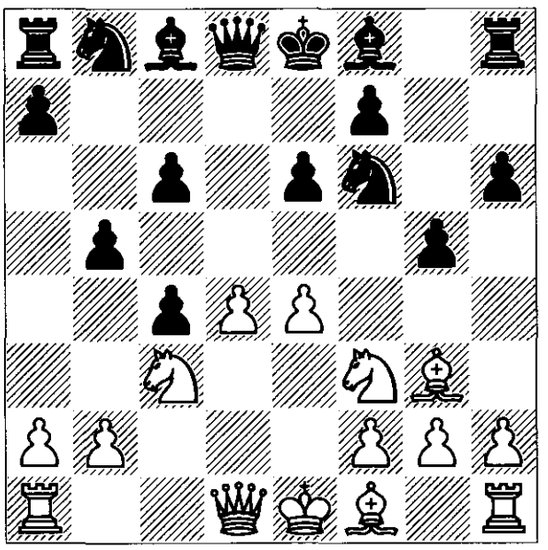
Another attacker joins the offensive, threatening 21...♘d3# and also 21...♕f3. Even the exchange of queens that follows no longer brings relief to the white king.

21 ♕c7+ ♔xc7 22 ♘d5+ ♔d7 23 ♘xf4 g5! 0-1

The f4-knight cannot move for it must defend against the mate on d3. There is no defence: against 24 ♗c3 one winning line is 24...gxf4 25 ♗xd4 ♘d3+ 26 ♔d2 ♘xc1 27 ♗xg7 ♖xf1 28 ♔xc1 e5, with virtually an extra rook, as Botvinnik showed.

In several positions in the Catalan or the Queen's Gambit, it is common for White to sacrifice a pawn in order to achieve a strong centre. It is not a magical recipe that guarantees the attainment of an advantage – in each case it depends on the characteristics of the position, which can be very diverse. Let's remember for instance a fashionable line of the Moscow Semi-Slav:

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 ♗g3 b5 *(D)*



In this case Black's extra pawn is solidly protected. If he survives the middlegame with no major change in the structure, he will have an almost decisive pawn-majority on the queenside. The main drawback is that his kingside is weakened and the black king has no clear haven anywhere. On top of that, White's centre hinders the mobility of the black pieces and very often the c8-bishop remains very passive, its mobility being limited by its own pawn-chain.

This is a position which several of the best players in the world employ with both colours. This means that there is no clear superiority for either side, or a definitive evaluation of the diagram position – victory will simply go to whoever makes the most of their advantages.

There are many similar lines, with differences in the placement of the pieces, such as the Geller Gambit in the Slav Defence (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 dxc4 5 e4 b5), although here the lack of any weakening of Black's kingside makes White's search for compensation more problematic. In all cases White has made a permanent concession – the sacrifice of a pawn – in exchange for temporary advantages such as in this case the occupation of the centre.

Before we examine our main game on this theme, let's examine a successful example of the sacrifice in the Catalan.

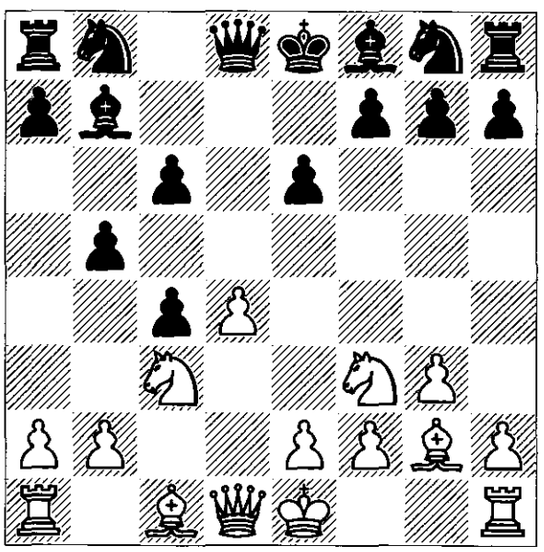
Supplementary Game 6.1

Artur Yusupov – Uwe Bönsch

Bundesliga 2000/1

Catalan Opening

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c6 4 ♘f3 dxc4 5 g3 b5 6 ♗g2 ♗b7 *(D)*



7 ♘e5

The main differences from the line mentioned above are White not having played e4 yet and the f1-bishop being developed to g2.

These changes make White's temporary advantages different from the Semi-Slav example mentioned above.

The pressure along the long diagonal exerted by the g2-bishop means that White doesn't rush to play e4 – he will do so only when the annoyance this causes becomes productive. It is necessary to find a different plan.

7...a6 8 a4

This creates favourable tension on the queenside, increasing the strength of the g2-bishop. Combinative motifs on b5 appear too, exploiting the pin against the b7-bishop. White is not afraid of the ...b4 advance, which would only weaken Black's structure and even make it crumble.

8...♘f6 9 0-0

White continues making 'necessary' moves before deciding on concrete action. It is not possible to win back the pawn by 9 axb5?! axb5 10 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 11 ♘xb5? cxb5 12 ♗xa8 because Black has the crushing 12...♕a5+.

9 ♗g5 is comfortably met by 9...♕c7, defending c6 and preparing ...♘bd7 with a solid position.

After the text-move, the check on a5 no longer exists so White does threaten to win back the pawn in good circumstances.

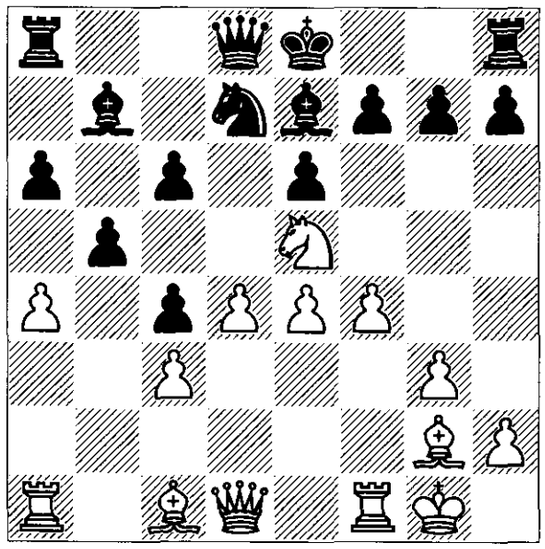
9...♘d5 10 e4

Black has neutralized the pressure on the long diagonal so it is time to go back to the more usual compensation – White occupies the centre with gain of time.

10...♘xc3 11 bxc3 ♘d7 12 f4

White has to do something with his lead in development before it loses its value, and so he tries to open lines.

12...♗e7 *(D)*

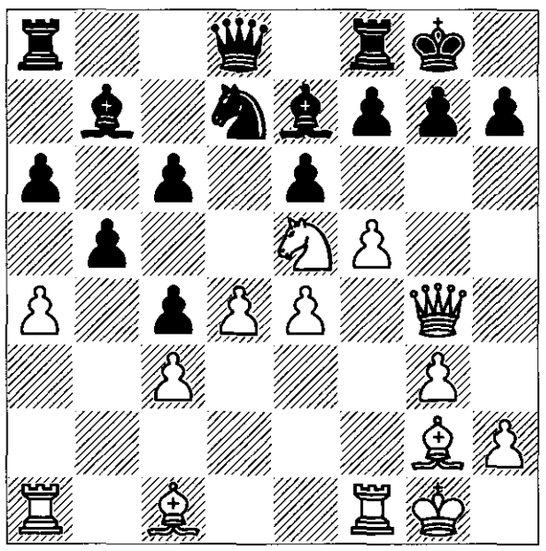


Black is planning to castle on his next move. How should White continue? There are several possibilities.

The sacrifice 13 ♘xf7?! is dangerous but with careful play Black gets an advantage: 13...♔xf7 14 f5 and now 14...exf5 15 ♖xf5+ ♔g8! (not 15...♔e8?) with advantage to Black, or 14...e5 15 ♕h5+ ♔g8, when Black hasn't allowed White to open up dangerous lines against his king. Once he has managed to coordinate his play, the extra piece will prove decisive.

It is also possible to play 13 ♕g4. White's initiative should be treated with respect, but he is forced to give up more material in order to prevent Black from freeing himself. There follows 13...0-0 14 f5 *(D)*, and now:

B



a) 14...♘f6 15 ♕e2, when one line is 15...exf5 16 ♖xf5 ♘d7 17 ♘g4 ♘b6! 18 ♘h6+!? gxh6 19 ♗xh6 ♕d6 (19...♔h8?! 20 e5) 20 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 21 a5 ♘a4! 22 ♕e3 ♗c8!, with a clear improvement in the activity of this bishop and in Black's position. Another unclear continuation is 15...c5 16 ♘xf7!? ♔xf7 (16...♖xf7 17 fxe6 ♖f8 transposes) 17 fxe6+ ♔g8 (not 17...♔xe6? 18 e5!), when 18 d5 gives White compensation for the piece.

b) Also possible is 14...exf5 15 ♕xf5 ♘xe5 16 ♕xe5 and here it is worth considering 16...c5, freeing the b7-bishop. White is almost forced to play 17 d5 ♗f6 18 ♖xf6.

None of these sacrifices is clear – the compensation is not always sufficient so White chooses a third possibility.

13 ♘g4!

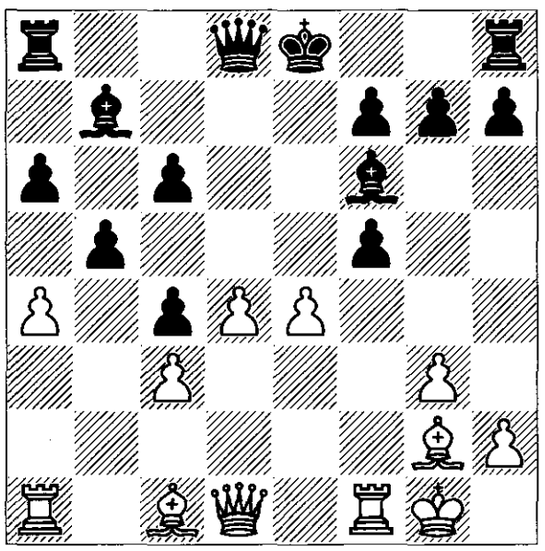
Preparing the f5 break without allowing the exchange of knights.

13...♘f6?!

After the more prudent 13...0-0, White can choose between 14 e5, 14 ♘e3 and the more direct 14 f5. The last is perhaps not best, for after 14...exf5 15 ♖xf5 the unprotected white queen on d1 allows 15...♘c5!? (or 15...♘f6) and virtually forces White to give up material again after 16 ♘h6+!? gxh6 17 ♗xh6, with a complex struggle ahead.

14 f5! exf5 15 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 *(D)*

W



16 ♗a3!

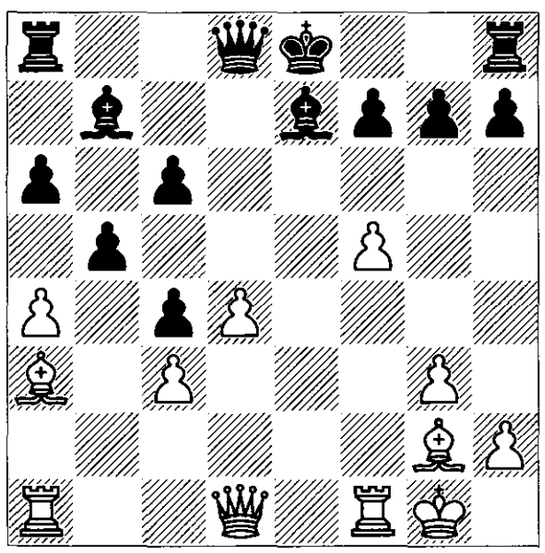
Momentarily preventing Black from castling. Instead 16 e5?! ♗e7 17 ♖xf5 0-0, followed by ...f6, is weak, with a slight plus for Black. As Yusupov points out, there is no need to close the game.

16...♗e7

After 16...fxe4 17 ♗xe4 ♕c7, 18 ♗f5 denies the enemy king refuge and gives White enough compensation, but 18 ♖xf6! gxf6 19 ♕g4 is even better – the black king won't be able to survive in the centre.

17 exf5 *(D)*

B



17...♗xa3

17...0-0 is met by 18 f6!, when 18...♗xa3 19 ♕g4 g6 20 ♖xa3 ♖e8 21 ♕f4 ♖e6 transposes to the game. After 18...♗xf6 19 ♗xf8 Black does not get enough compensation for the exchange

– the passive b7-bishop doesn't allow Black to be optimistic.

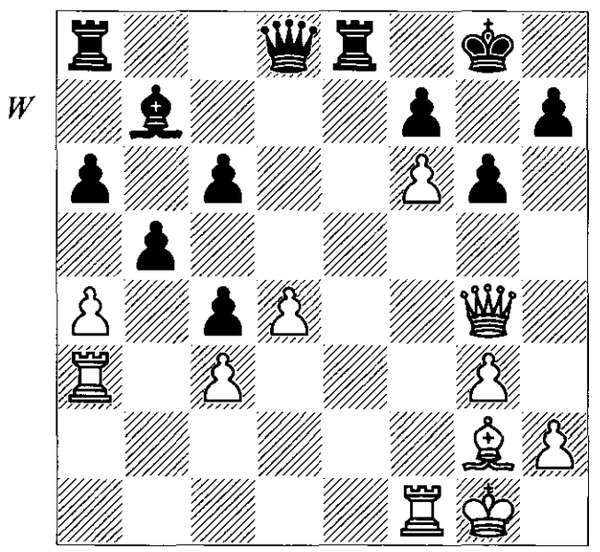
18 ♖xa3 0-0 19 f6!

The wedge on f6 is essential for White's initiative. Breaking up the king's pawn-cover with 19...gxf6? is out of the question – there could follow 20 ♗e4 and then White brings the queen into the attack.

19...♖e8

Yusupov suggested 19...♕d6 as an alternative – then 20 ♕h5 gives White a strong initiative. The text-move is enough to keep the tension and retain a playable position.

20 ♕g4 g6 *(D)*



21 ♕f4!

With the idea of playing ♕h6 without allowing the black queen to get to f8 via d6.

21...♖e6 22 axb5!

This is the right moment to resolve the tension. There is no way to increase the pressure on the kingside other than through this simplification, which removes defenders of the kingside.

22...axb5 23 ♖xa8 ♗xa8

The alternative was 23...♕xa8, but this seems riskier, as White manages to drive all the black pieces away from the defence with a precise manoeuvre: 24 ♗h3 ♖e2 25 ♗g4! ♖a2. Now Black's queen and rook are ready to cooperate and invade White's camp with 26...♖a1 but they are also far away from the kingside. White gets a strong attack with 26 ♗e6!, threatening 27 ♗xf7+ and 28 ♕c7+, which cannot be prevented by 26...♕f8, for there follows 27 ♗xf7+! ♔xf7 28 ♕c7+ and 29 ♕xb7, when the f6-pawn prevents any serious resistance.

24 ♗h3!

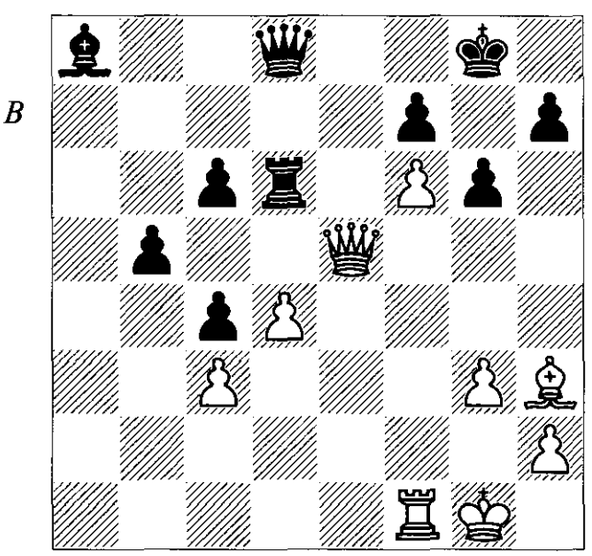
This is the only piece yet to come into play and it manages to disrupt the coordination of the black pieces.

24...♖d6

Here the rook compromises the mobility of the queen but there was no alternative. Naturally, the rook cannot go to the back rank due to 25 ♕h6, but moving it far away is also inadvisable: in the event of 24...♖e2 White has several ways of winning, such as 25 ♗g4 ♖a2 26 ♖e1 ♖a7 27 ♕h6 ♕f8 28 ♖e8, and the white king escapes after 28...♖a1+ 29 ♔g2 ♖a2+ 30 ♔h3.

25 ♕e5! *(D)*

The more obvious 25 ♖a1?! is not so strong due to 25...♖xf6! 26 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 27 ♕xf6 ♕a1+ 28 ♗f1 ♕xc3, with equality.



25...♔f8?

Black goes astray in a difficult position: this passive move brings him to the brink of defeat.

Black cannot improve with 25...b4, trying to use the queenside majority to distract White from his attack. Besides 26 cxb4 ♖xd4 27 ♖e1 ♖d1 28 ♖xd1 ♕xd1+ 29 ♗f1 ♕d8 30 ♗xc4, with a plus for White, given that it's still not possible to bring the f1-rook into the attack White can start his offensive with the *zwischenzug* 26 ♕e7!, with the mortal threat of 27 ♖e1.

In this last line, as well as in several previous ones, we see that White is practically playing with an extra piece. Black's priority was therefore to free the dormant a8-bishop, giving back

the extra pawn with 25...c5! 26 dxc5 and now 26...♖d2 so that after 27 ♖e1 Black can maintain his defence with 27...♗c6. But not 26...♖d1? 27 ♖xd1 ♕xd1+ 28 ♗f1 ♕d8 29 ♕e7! ♕f8 30 ♗g2! ♗xg2 31 ♔xg2 ♕a8+ 32 ♔f2, when the passed pawn together with Black's very exposed king prevent any defence. It is better to keep the rook. By using this resource Black would have reduce White's superiority to the minimum.

26 ♖a1!

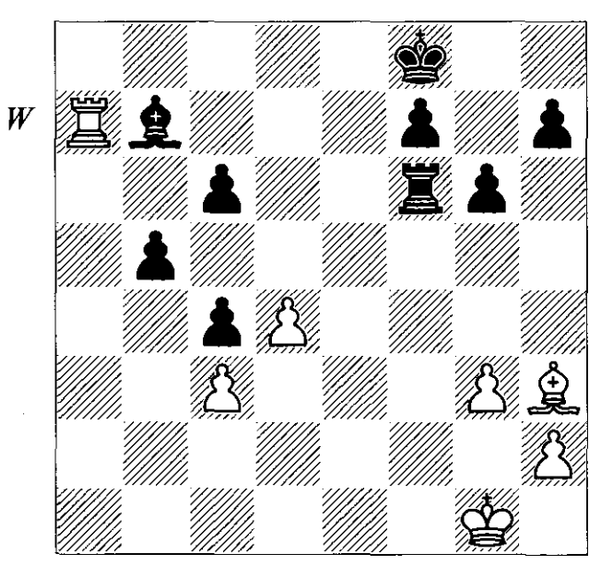
With the threat of 27 ♖xa8. The infiltration thus attained on this file will be decisive.

26...♗b7?!

After this and the invasion by the white rook, the fight is almost over.

The critical move, providing the best practical chances, was 26...♖xf6. White's activity is very strong after 27 ♖a7 c5! (better than 27...♔g7 28 ♗e6 ♔h6 29 ♖d7 ♖xe6 30 ♖xd8, winning) 28 ♖d7 ♕b6 29 ♕e7+ ♔g7 30 ♖d8. This line is advantageous, but White doesn't need to calculate so much – the surprising computer move 27 ♗c8! is much simpler and yet difficult to see at first sight because the rook move seems so much more obvious.

27 ♖a7 ♕xf6 28 ♕xf6 ♖xf6 *(D)*



29 ♗g2!

Simpler than 29 ♖xb7 ♖f3 30 ♗g2 ♖xc3 31 ♗xc6, although of course White also wins in that case. Now Black's whole queenside falls.

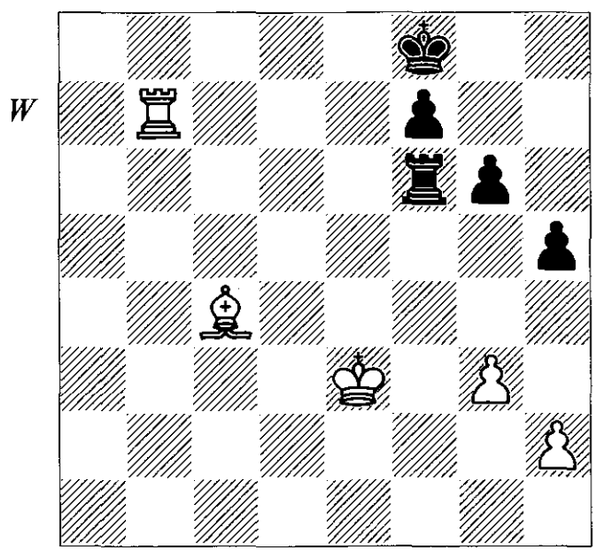
29...b4 30 ♖xb7 bxc3

After 30...b3 31 ♗f1, or some other move first and then ♗f1, White wins quickly.

31 ♖b4 ♖d6 32 ♖xc4 c2 33 ♖xc2 ♖xd4 34 ♗xc6 h5?!

Making White's victory easier, although the position is already lost.

35 ♗f3 ♖d7 36 ♖b2 ♔g7 37 ♔f2 ♖d6 38 ♖b7 ♖d2+ 39 ♗e2 ♖d6 40 ♗c4 ♖f6+ 41 ♔e3 ♔f8 *(D)*



The winning plan consists of improving the pieces, including the king, and reaching a winning pawn endgame: White pushes the pawn to g5, then takes on f7, giving back the piece but winning the opposition. The ending with the white pawn on g5 against a black one on g6 is winning for White.

This very same endgame and other similar ones can be found analysed in the instructive book *Endgame Secrets* by Christopher Lutz (pages 62-4).

42 h3 ♔g7 43 g4 hxg4 44 hxg4 ♔f8 45 ♖c7 ♔g7 46 ♔e4 ♖f2 47 g5 ♖f5 48 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 49 ♗xf7 ♔xf7 50 ♔d5! 1-0

The capture of the black pawn is inevitable, and with the king on the sixth there is no possible defence.

We can extract several lessons from this game, outside the main purpose of this chapter but equally useful. For instance, once material has been given up, keeping the initiative requires energetic play, often requiring new material sacrifices, such as 14 f5!, 16 ♗a3! and 19 f6!.

"If a piece is badly placed, the whole position is bad" – in our game the a8-bishop can reliably bear witness to this.

It is also important not to miss the critical moments of the game, when one cannot afford to overlook moves that keep the tension, as in the change of structure by 22 axb5!, or supporting the position, such as 25...c5! instead of 25...♔f8?.

One weakness is not enough to decide the game, but when the struggle concentrates the opponent's pieces on one side of the board, a change of front exploiting a second weakness can be decisive – 26 ♖a1!.

Lastly, let's note from a practical point of view that knowledge of the endgame is especially vital with modern time-limits – without having a solid foundation it would be difficult at the board to find the winning method mentioned after Black's 41st move.

In the following game, a similar thematic pawn sacrifice is no longer justified due to an early inaccuracy by White, but in order to prove it Black has to play very precisely.

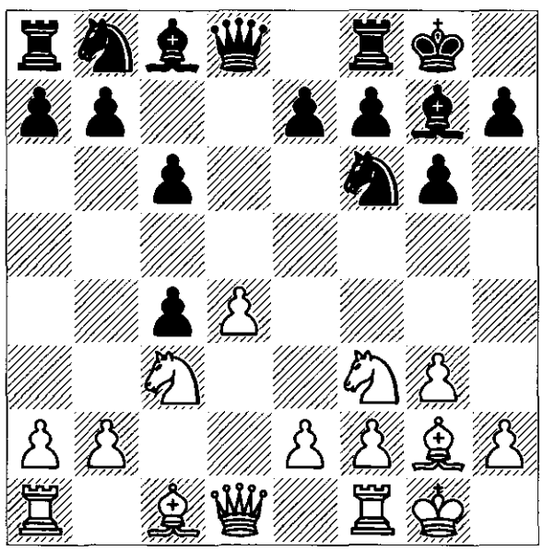
Game 6

Oleg Romanishin – Viswanathan Anand

PCA Candidates match (game 3), New York 1994

Grünfeld Defence, Fianchetto Variation

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c4 ♗g7 4 g3 d5 5 ♗g2 dxc4 6 0-0 c6 7 ♘c3 0-0 *(D)*



In this position there are several little differences from the Yusupov game. It is not easy to find a useful move that is to be preferred to 8 e4. In this case 8 ♘e5?! is well met by 8...♘g4!, when Black keeps his extra pawn.

8 h3?!

Another difference from the previous game is that the h3-c8 diagonal is open and White doesn't want to allow the reply 8...♗g4 before playing e4.

The text-move also rules out the jump ...♘g4, the main idea being to play 9 ♘e5. It is an ambitious idea but since he has already given up a pawn, wasting one tempo on a move that doesn't help with development or create threats might not be so good – it is not clear whether the text-move is an improvement over 8 e4.

Now Black has the task of finding the best way of confronting White's ideas of 9 ♘e5, 9 e4 or even 9 a4.

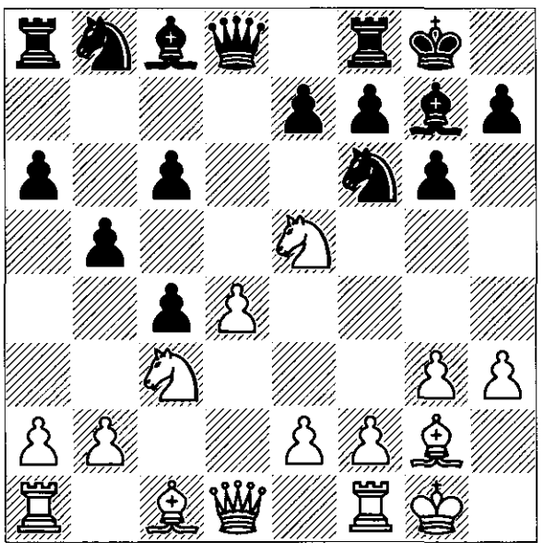
9 ♘e5 could be prevented by 8...♘bd7 but the black pieces would remain somewhat passive. Besides 9 e4 White could also consider 9 a4. Should White win back the pawn, he would have control of the centre for free.

This was the third game in the match: in the first one the same line was played, and against 8 h3 Anand reacted with 8...♘a6, leaving his pieces with more freedom than with 8...♘bd7, and ruling out 9 a4 since Black has ...♘b4 at his disposal and in the event of e4 comes a timely ...♘d3. However, after 9 e4 the knight ended up somewhat misplaced. The game continued 9...b5 10 ♕e2 ♗b7 11 ♖d1 ♘c7, showing that this is a reasonable option. But for his next game Anand had prepared a move-order that leaves his pieces placed in a much more harmonious way – he doesn't decide yet the destination of his queen's knight, exploiting the move 8 h3 in a direct way in some lines.

8...b5!

A necessary move: he has to protect the pawn but also have an adequate reply to ♘e5.

9 ♘e5 a6! *(D)*



10 e4

There aren't any more useful moves that are better than occupying the centre. Here it is not possible to create favourable tension on the queenside with 10 a4. Black could play 10...b4! since White can't reply 11 ♘e4? ♘xe4 12 ♗xe4 ♗xh3 (this is the direct method to punish 8 h3 mentioned above; it prevents White from entering several lines). The knight must therefore retreat to a modest square. After 11 ♘a2 Black achieves a very comfortable position by 11...a5 12 ♘xc4 ♗e6 and now 13 ♘e5 ♗d5. Worse is 13 b3 ♘bd7 14 ♗xc6?! ♖c8 15 ♗g2 (if 15 d5, then 15...♗xh3) 15...♗xc4 16 bxc4 ♖xc4.

10 ♘xc6? ♘xc6 11 ♗xc6 ♗xh3 is also unacceptable for White, who is still a pawn down without compensation.

10...♗b7 11 ♖e1

After 11 ♗e3 ♘bd7 12 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 13 e5 a similar position to the game is reached where ♗e3 is less useful than ♖e1.

11...♘bd7

Completing development and eliminating the strong e5-knight.

12 ♘xd7 ♘xd7

White would be able to proceed unhindered after 12...♕xd7, trying to discourage 13 e5 because of the strong knight that would appear on d5 after 13...♘d5. White would then have 14 ♘e4! at his disposal, when Black needs to worry about the passive b7-bishop. White controls the vital c5-square, and although the d5-knight is strong, it doesn't coordinate effectively with the rest of its forces. Black has another idea in mind.

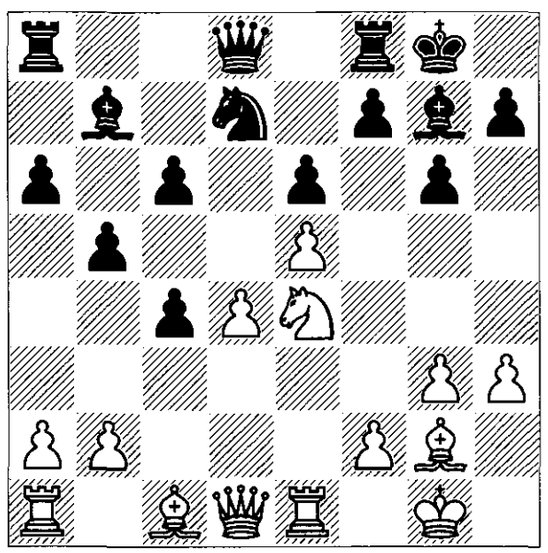
13 e5!

The g2-bishop exerts pressure on the long diagonal. White clears e4 for his c3-knight and raises the possibility of advancing to e6, playing h4-h5, or exchanging the only defender of the king's position with ♗e3 and ♕d2. Black must therefore play actively.

13...e6!

This looks at first like a mistake – on top of the weakness on c5 another one appears on d6, but this is an essential part of Black's idea of fighting against the white centre.

14 ♘e4 *(D)*



What was Black's idea? The break ...c5 is on the cards but 14...♖b8, defending the b7-bishop, is met by 15 ♗g5!, seizing the dark squares with tempo, and after any queen move comes 16 ♘d6, with 17 ♗e7 as a threat.

Also unsatisfactory is 14...♕c7 15 ♘d6 ♖ab8 16 ♗g5!, as Anand points out. Let's see a little more: if 16...f6, there follows 17 exf6 ♘xf6 (not 17...♗xf6? 18 ♗f4!) 18 ♖xe6 ♕d7 19 ♕e2, with a good game. White wins back his pawn and has active pieces. Passivity is still hardly advisable. If 16...♘b6?!, there could follow 17 ♕d2 ♘d5 18 h4.

14...c5!

Black doesn't need to defend the b7-bishop – after considerable complications he manages to get rid of his main weakness, namely the passive bishop. Black had to calculate quite a lot

because there are very complicated lines and his kingside may end up weakened.

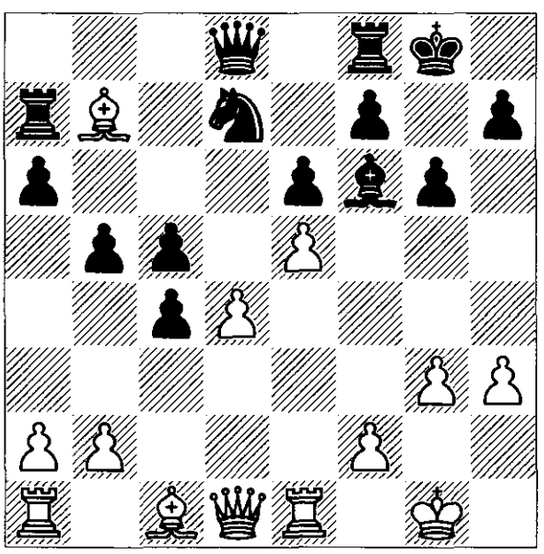
15 ♘f6+

Or 15 ♘xc5 ♗xg2 16 ♔xg2 (after 16 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 17 ♔xg2 ♕d5+ 18 ♔g1 ♖ac8 Black's queenside majority starts to tell) 16...♘xc5 17 dxc5 ♕xd1 18 ♖xd1 ♗xe5.

15...♗xf6

Black doesn't need to go for complications since a quiet course of the fight suits him. After 15...♘xf6?! 16 exf6 ♗xf6 17 ♗xb7 ♖a7, 18 ♗e4 cxd4 gives Black compensation for the piece but 18 ♗c6! cxd4 19 a4! b4 20 ♗h6 ♗g7 21 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 22 ♖e4 is better, when that compensation is less clear.

16 ♗xb7 ♖a7 *(D)*



W

17 ♗g2?!

"Played after a long think. Even if Romanishin found 17 exf6 unsatisfactory, he should have gone for it. After the text-move he is just a pawn down." (Anand).

The preference for playing 17 exf6 ♖xb7 18 ♗g5! is basically practical – White would have a clear idea, namely to use the wedge on f6 to create mating threats against the black king. Black has several options but he must not underestimate White's attack. The strongest, as Anand comments, is 18...♖b6!, with ideas of getting rid of the bothersome pawn on f6 or activating along the d-file. The main line given by Anand is 19 ♕g4 (no better is 19 dxc5 ♘xc5 20 ♕g4 ♘d3, when against the threat of ♕h6 there is always the defensive resource ...h5) 19...♖d6 20 dxc5 (it is not possible to protect d4 by 20 ♖e4: apart from 20...h6, Black can also play 20...cxd4 21 ♕h4 e5 22 ♕h6 ♘xf6 23 ♖h4 ♖e8) 20...♘xc5 21 ♕h4 h5 22 g4 ♖d4 23 ♗e3 ♘d3! 24 ♗xd4 ♕xd4, with tremendous compensation for the exchange. Black's pieces have repelled the attack. He also has the threat of ♕h6 under control and his superiority on the queenside is manifest.

17...♗g7 18 a4 ♖c7

The alternative, of roughly equal value, was 18...cxd4 19 ♕xd4 (not 19 axb5? ♘xe5, which favours Black after both 20 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 21 bxa6 ♕a5! and 20 bxa6 ♕b6) 19...♖c7 20 axb5 axb5.

19 axb5 axb5 20 ♖a8

The piece Black needs to get into play in order to make all the difference is the d7-knight, which has a shining future on d3. If 20 ♗e3, Black would reach his goal by 20...cxd4 21 ♗xd4 ♘c5!, when after 22 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 the extra queenside pawn will decide.

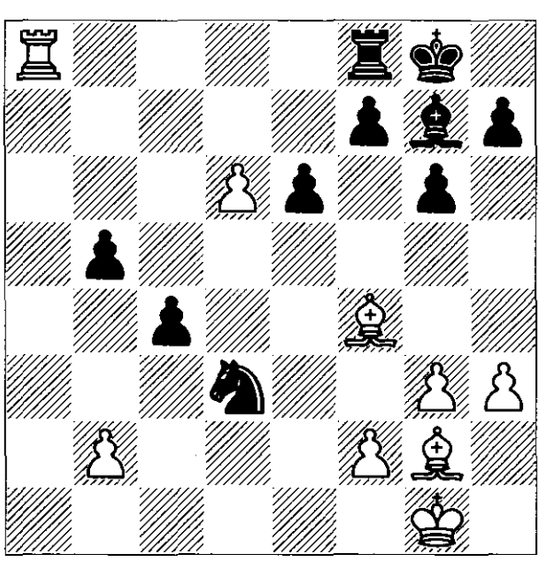
20...♖c8 21 ♖xc8 ♕xc8 22 ♗f4 cxd4!

Now it is no longer possible to prevent the infiltration by the knight.

23 ♕xd4 ♘c5 24 ♕d6 ♘d3 25 ♖a1 ♕d8!

Not, of course, 25...♘xb2? 26 ♖a8, when White manages to save the game.

26 ♖a8 ♕xd6 27 exd6 *(D)*



B

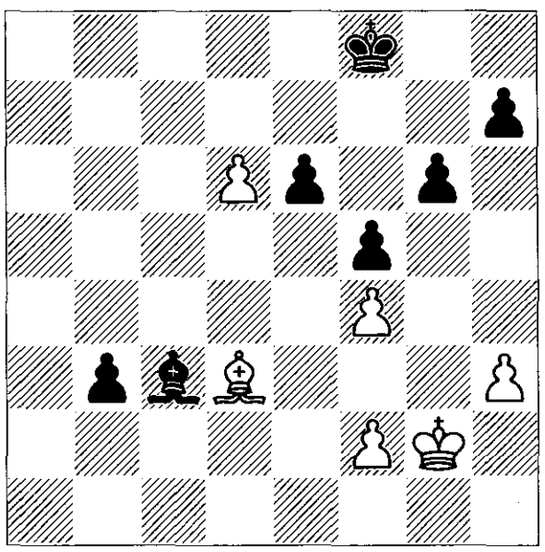
27...♘xf4!

The opposite-coloured bishops are not an obstacle for Black to win because his extra pawn will become a passed one, thus paralysing White's game. Furthermore, all the white pawns are now isolated and weak.

28 gxf4 ♖xa8 29 ♗xa8 ♔f8!

The last important move. Instead the hasty 29...♗xb2?!, as Anand points out, allows White to prolong the fight after 30 ♗c6! b4 31 ♗b5 ♔f8 32 ♗xc4 ♗c1 33 f5 gxf5 34 ♗b3, followed by ♗a4 – the white bishop takes on the double role of supporting the d7-pawn and controlling the b4 one.

30 ♗c6 b4 31 ♗b5 c3! 32 bxc3 b3 33 ♗d3 ♗xc3 34 ♔g2 f5! *(D)*



Fixing the weakness of f4.

35 ♔f3 ♗b4 36 ♗c4 b2 37 ♗a2 ♗xd6 38 ♔e3 ♔g7 39 ♗b1 ♔h6 40 ♔f3 0-1

White overstepped the time-limit, but his position was lost anyway. There would have followed 40...♔h5!, capturing either the h3- or the f4-pawn, since 41 ♔g3 is met by 41...g5.

In structures derived from the Sicilian Defence, several of the most important tactical motifs consist of piece sacrifices on critical squares such as b5, d5, e6 and f5, seeking to open up lines to attack the black king.

The jump ♘d5 is one of the more frequent, especially if the black king is still on e8, although it has been also carried out against a king castled on the kingside – opening the diagonal of a bishop on d3 – or even with the king castled on the queenside – this time using the control over the c6-square arising from its capture and exd5 by White, to mention just some of the details of the position.

It is a dangerous sacrifice that obtains evident compensation. It has given White many a victory but needless to say it doesn't lead to an automatic win – its true effectiveness depends on each situation.

Before our main game let's take a look at an example where the sacrifice is carried out in optimal circumstances.

Supplementary Game 7.1

Leonid Stein – Semion Furman

USSR Ch, Moscow 1969

Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 a6 5 ♘c3 ♕c7 6 g3 b5?!

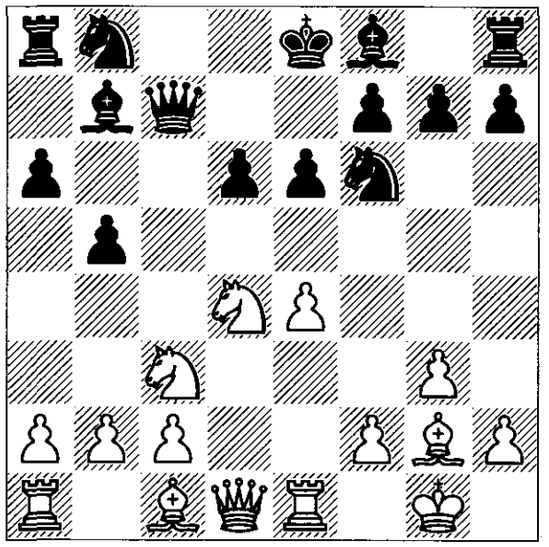
A strange decision by Furman, a good theoretician who would later on become Karpov's second. The move ...b5 seeks to accelerate the development of the queen's bishop before deciding how to deploy the other minor pieces. This move is a major element in Sicilian strategy but in this situation it soon leads to a difficult position: White will exploit it to advance his initiative.

Black should play one of the natural moves 6...♘f6, 6...♘c6 or 6...d6, leading to accepted theoretical positions.

7 ♗g2 ♗b7 8 0-0 ♘f6 9 ♖e1 d6 *(D)*

The first annoyances show up – it is not possible to carry on developing with 9...♗e7? for 10 e5 forces 10...♘g8, since 10...♗xg2? 11 exf6 costs Black material.

How should White continue after the text-move? He has several attractive options. For instance, he can continue developing with 10 ♗g5, when Black's best option is probably 10...♘bd7. Instead, 10...♗e7 is somewhat risky. After 11 ♗xf6!, 11...gxf6?! is strongly met by 12 ♕h5, while 11...♗xf6!? has the point that 12 ♘dxb5!? axb5 13 ♘xb5 ♕b6! 14 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 15 ♘xb7 ♗e5! allows Black to fight on, although White



retains the initiative. There are other promising possibilities, such as 12 a4!?, seeking to open a new front.

The immediate 10 ♘d5 also deserves attention. After 10...exd5 11 exd5+ ♔d8 the compensation is apparent, although there is only one pawn for the piece – the black king will have to spend several tempi to reach safety. The opening of the e-file can be exploited immediately. The d5-pawn does more than momentarily nullify the b7-bishop and create coordination problems for Black. White's control of c6 can become very important too, with a timely ♘c6. There could follow 12 ♗g5 ♘bd7 13 ♕e2, but in this position Black has 13...♕c4!, giving an escape-square to his king and somewhat improving his situation.

10 a4! b4

After this move, there is no ...♕c4 in similar lines to the one mentioned above after 10 ♘d5. This is not the only advantage White achieved by forcing this advance, as we shall see.

However, the capture 10...bxa4 weakens Black's structure and is an important concession. White gets the advantage simply by 11 ♖xa4, activating the rook and targeting the isolated pawn on a6, or even by means of 11 ♘d5!, with good compensation after 11...exd5 12 exd5+ ♔d8 13 ♖xa4 ♘bd7 and now 14 ♗d2 or 14 c4 ♘b6 15 ♖a3.

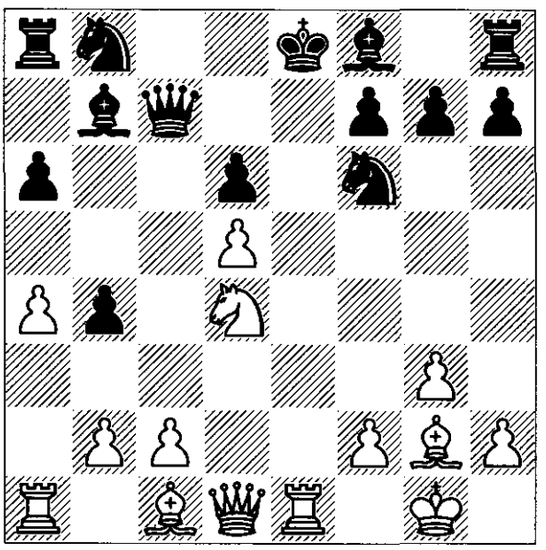
11 ♘d5!

Of course this was the idea, although in this specific case the passive 11 ♘a2 wins a pawn in exchange for leaving the white pieces somewhat awkwardly placed.

11...exd5

Keeping the file closed with 11...♘xd5 12 exd5 e5 is not enough to hold the game. Among other moves there could follow 13 ♗d2, and in order to support the pawn Black must play 13...a5, allowing 14 ♘b5, since 13...♕b6 14 ♗e3! ♕c7 15 ♕d2 is insufficient.

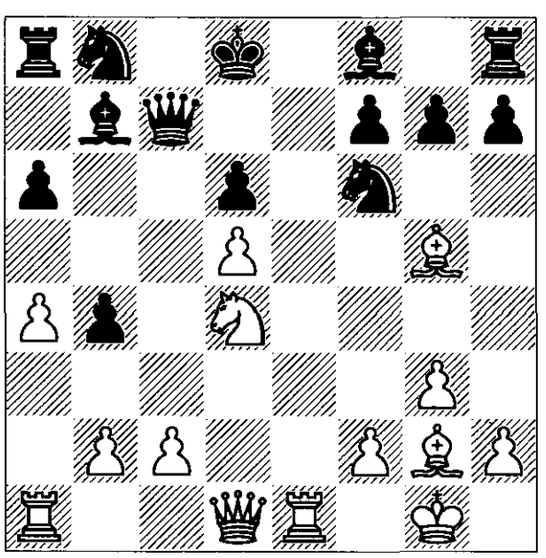
12 exd5+ *(D)*



12...♔d8

Revealing another drawback of the development of the b7-bishop, namely the lack of control over f5. This prevents 12...♗e7 because of 13 ♘f5 ♘g8 14 ♗g5 f6 15 ♘xg7+ ♔f7 16 ♘e6, with a decisive double threat.

13 ♗g5 *(D)*



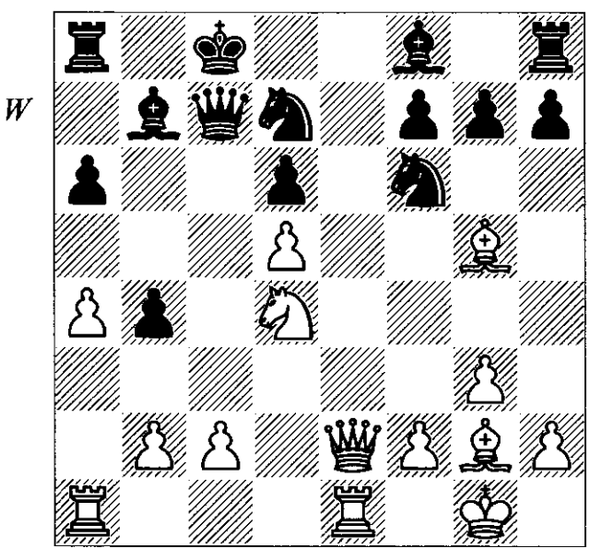
White continues with his development. Black now has several ways to try to do likewise, but none of them clearly improve his game.

13...♘d7

13...♗e7 is met again by 14 ♘f5, and Black's position crumbles after 14...♖e8 15 ♘xg7 ♖g8 16 ♕d4!.

13...♗c8 was played the following year in Quiñones-Higashi, Siegen Olympiad 1970. Obviously this undeveloping move cannot be good. White continues activating his pieces with 14 ♗xf6+ gxf6 15 ♕h5 ♖a7 16 ♖e4 ♗g7 17 ♖ae1 and Black has no defence. His king has no safe haven and his pieces lack coordination. One possible idea for White, which was not used in the game, is ♗h3 in order to exchange the bishops and win back control of the f5-square.

14 ♕e2 ♔c8 *(D)*



Black has met the threat of 15 ♕e8#. Now White has several options. One is 15 ♕e8+ nonetheless, winning another pawn; another is 15 ♘c6, occupying the weak square and almost certainly creating a very strong wedge on c6.

If either of these lines were winning, there wouldn't be any doubt about playing them. However, it is not so clear; for instance, after 15 ♕e8+ there follows 15...♕d8 (15...♘xe8? loses to 16 ♖xe8+) 16 ♗xf6 ♘xf6! and now 17 ♕xf7 ♕d7! or 17 ♗h3+ ♔c7 18 ♕xf7+ ♔b8, and the danger of White's offensive is reduced.

It would be very convenient to bring another piece into the attack keeping both ♘c6 and ♕e8+ in reserve, and it is here where having forced 10...b4 fits into place.

15 c3! b3

Black must keep files closed: if 15...bxc3, there follows 16 ♖ac1 and the rook's entry into the game is decisive.

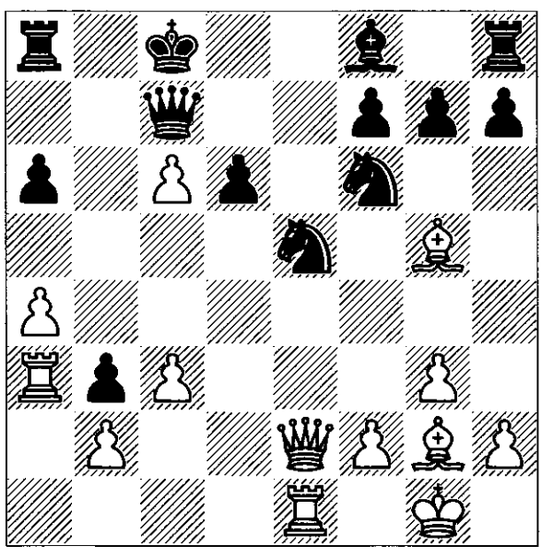
16 ♘c6!

White could play 16 ♘xb3 but this would be a relief for Black. The text-move seeks to bring another piece into play.

16...♗xc6 17 dxc6 ♘e5

It is imperative to seal the e-file but White was counting on the removal of the knight to achieve his idea.

18 ♖a3! *(D)*



Now the d6-pawn cannot be defended.

18...d5!

For now the long diagonal is closed and the f8-bishop escapes from its prison.

If 18...♖b8, the a6-pawn falls, while the strong c6-pawn cannot be eliminated with 18...♘xc6? because of 19 ♗xf6 gxf6 20 ♕e8+, winning.

Developing at last the f8-bishop by 18...♗e7 isn't enough either – there can follow 19 ♖xb3 ♘xc6 and here 20 a5! (not 20 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 21 ♕xe7? ♖e8!), seems better than 20 ♕f3 because of 20...♖b8!.

19 ♖xb3 ♗d6

Black has solved the serious damage to his position in a satisfactory manner: the f8-bishop has shaken off its lethargy and the g2-bishop is inactive. White must try to make further progress.

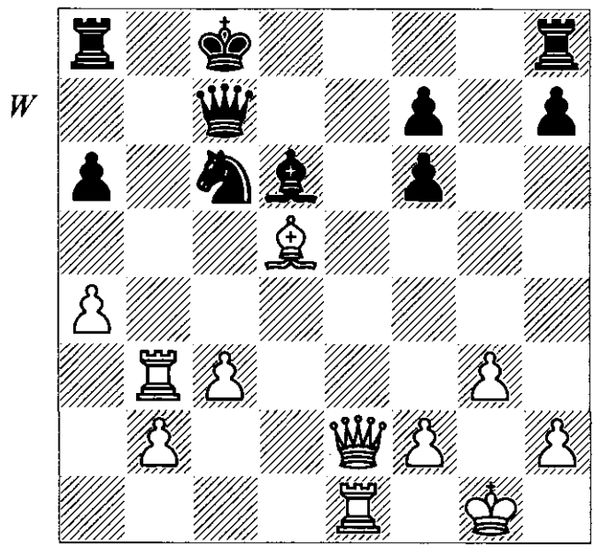
20 ♗xf6!

In principle, simplifications don't favour the side with less material but here White manages to get his g2-bishop back into the game.

20...gxf6 21 ♗xd5 ♘xc6 *(D)*

The pawn is unbearable and has to be eliminated even if this means opening up more lines.

If, for instance, 21...♖a7?, then 22 ♖b7 ♖xb7 23 cxb7+, followed by 24 ♕xa6 with four pawns for the piece and a strong pawn on the seventh.



How should White continue with the attack?

White cannot exploit the strength of the g2-bishop by 22 ♕c4? since Black defends with 22...♘a5!.

Black seems to have regrouped well and his king is no longer in danger, but the white pieces are still more active – his two rooks are playing, whereas Black's are not, so the task now is to find a way to make their influence be felt. How?

22 ♕g4+!

With a queen exchange. Now 22...♔d8? is not possible due to 23 ♕f3, winning.

22...♕d7 23 ♕xd7+ ♔xd7 24 ♖b7+ ♗c7 25 ♗g2!

Another key move – the bishop drops back, clearing the d-file. The black king will suffer the assault of the three white pieces, and the pawns will join them soon. Black has to make a long march with his king in order to avoid material losses.

25...♖ad8

25...♖hd8 is no better for there follows 26 ♖d1+ ♔c8 27 ♖xd8+ and now 27...♔xb7 28 ♗xc6+ or 27...♘xd8 28 ♖xc7+, with White winning in both cases.

26 ♗h3+!

Since the rook is no longer on a8 it would be a mistake to play 26 ♖d1+? because of 26...♔c8!, and Black escapes unscathed.

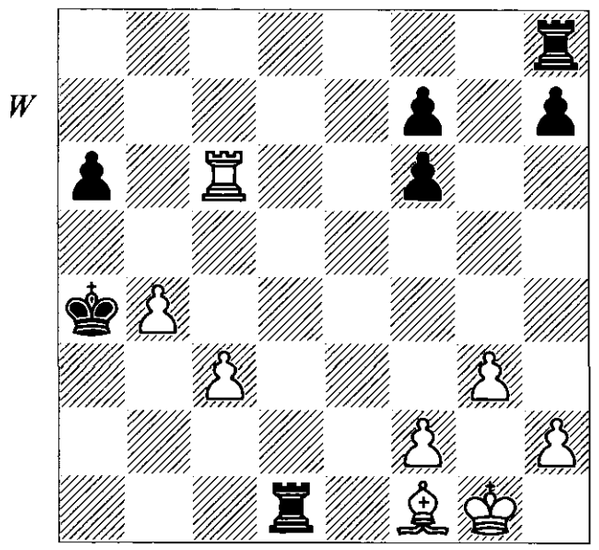
26...♔d6 27 ♖d1+ ♔c5

White's task is easier after 27...♔e5? 28 f4+ ♔e4 29 ♖e1+ and 30 ♖xc7, winning.

28 b4+ ♔c4 29 ♗f1+! ♔b3

If 29...♔xc3, then 30 ♖c1+ wins.

30 ♖xc7 ♖xd1 31 ♖xc6 ♔xa4 *(D)*



32 ♔g2!

Unpinning the f1-bishop. Wrong was 32 ♖xa6+?! ♔b3 33 ♖xf6 ♖e8! and Black is very close to a draw; e.g., 34 ♔g2 ♖ee1 35 ♗a6 ♖e6.

Now 33 ♗xa6 is threatened – the following move doesn't save the pawn because the black king is in a mating-net.

32...a5 33 bxa5

The pawn is untouchable due to 34 ♖a6#.

33...♖hd8 34 ♖xf6 ♖8d7 35 a6 ♖c1 36 ♗d3!

Now it is the bishop that is immune, because the passed pawn promotes after 36...♖xd3 37 a7 ♖d8 38 ♖a6+.

36...♖xc3 37 ♗xh7 ♔b4 38 ♗e4 ♖a3 39 ♗b7 ♔c5 40 h4

White's victory is simple – everything is protected and he has two passed pawns.

40...♔d4 41 ♖f5 ♖e7 42 h5 ♖e5 43 ♖f4+ ♔c5 44 h6 1-0

The game is yet another example of the risks of delaying the development of the kingside and keeping the king in the centre for longer than is prudent. Of course, there is often a thin line between recklessly leaving the king in the centre and a correct decision to avoid prematurely castling. It is not always as clear as in this case.

White had to play both elegantly and effectively, such as with 10 a4!, forcing the reply 10...b4 which he could exploit later on, and only then 11 ♘d5!.

Black's good defence enabled him to put up considerable resistance, and precise moves were needed to convert the advantage, such as 26 ♗h3+!, 32 ♔g2!, and 36 ♗d3!.

In our main game the sacrifice is carried out in less favourable conditions than in the game we've just seen.

Game 7

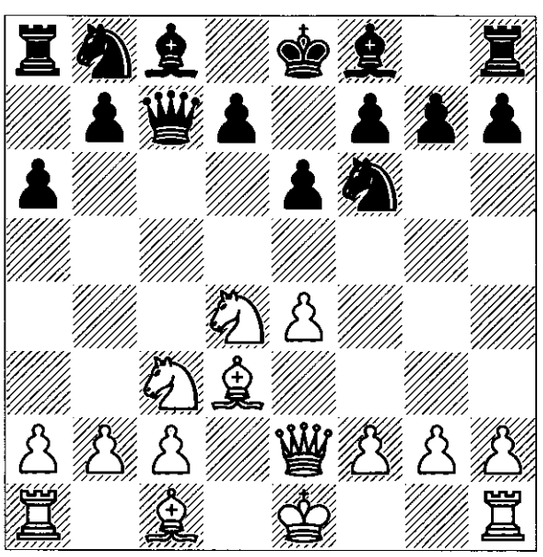
Emil Sutovsky – Vasily Ivanchuk

Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2005

Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 a6 5 ♘c3 ♕c7 6 ♗d3 ♘f6 7 ♕e2 *(D)*

This move, a favourite of Sutovsky's, is more aggressive than the more usual 7 0-0.


B

White immediately threatens to play 8 e5 without yet deciding the destination of his king.

7...♗d6

It is risky for Black to initiate premature tactical complications by 7...b5?! 8 e5 b4 9 ♘cb5 axb5 10 ♘xb5!, as we see in Supplementary Game 7.2, Sutovsky-Kunte.

The most natural reply is to prevent the e5-advance with 7...d6, leading to a typical Scheveningen-type position after 8 f4. However, Black prefers to retain the distinct character of the position with a developing move. Blocking the d7-pawn does not hamper Black's development because he will fianchetto his queen's bishop. And if White wants to threaten the e5 advance, he will have to regroup, and Black has enough time and resources to counter such a plan.

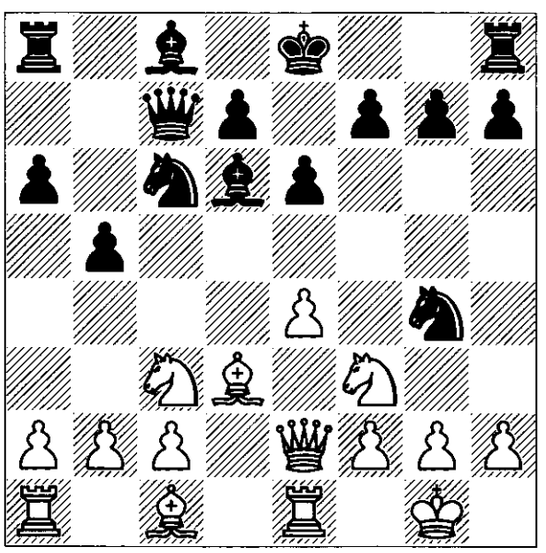
8 ♘f3

Black had no need to fear 8 ♘db5? axb5 9 ♘xb5 ♕a5+ 10 ♗d2 ♗b4, when White does not have enough compensation for the piece.

8...♘c6 9 0-0 b5

Black delays castling because he hopes to exploit both the white king's position and the pressure that the bishops create by targeting it. His idea is not to mate, but rather to inconvenience White while finishing his own development and thus achieve a balanced game.

10 ♖e1 ♘g4 *(D)*


W

This active defence attacking the h2-pawn is a typical manoeuvre to entrench the knight on e5. Black does not fear 11 h3 ♘ge5 12 ♘xe5 ♘xe5, when 13 f4? fails to 13...♘xd3 and 14...♗xf4, so Black can complete his development by ...♗b7 and ...0-0 without any trouble.

Black is also not afraid of White preparing f4 with 11 g3 because the black bishops would be fearsome if the diagonals leading to the white kingside were opened. Apart from the simple 11...0-0 there is Ivanchuk's suggestion 11...♗c5 12 ♘d1 d6, with an equal game.

11 ♘d5?!

White wants to punish the situation of the black king in the centre with this typical sacrifice, but objectively it is dubious – if we compare Supplementary Game 7.1, Black's development is much superior. However, in order to prove that White's idea is incorrect, Black must find a number of highly concrete and accurate moves.

11...exd5 12 exd5+ ♘e7 13 ♗f4

A 'free' developing move thanks to a direct threat.

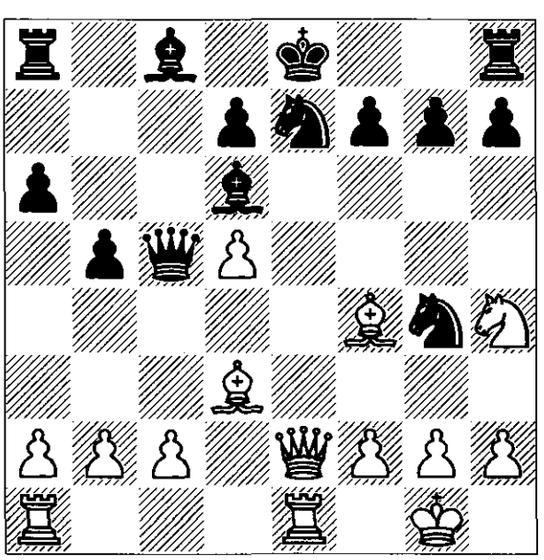
It was not possible to find a more active place for the bishop. 13 ♗g5 gives Black one ambitious option in the form of 13...♘f6, but is more safely met by 13...f6!, making the e5-square available for Black. After 14 ♗f4 ♘e5 15 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 16 ♗xe5 fxe5 17 ♕h5+ g6 18 ♕g5 d6 19 f4 0-0 20 fxe5 ♘xd5 Black has an extra piece and his king is safely tucked away – there isn't enough compensation.

13...♕c5!

Forced – Black thwarts the threat of 14 ♕xe7+! and discreetly targets the point f2.

14 ♘h4! *(D)*

B



Now White threatens both ♕xg4 and the menacing ♘f5.

How is Black to stay afloat? 14...♗xf4? loses to 15 ♕xg4, threatening 16 ♕xf4, 16 ♕xg7 and 16 ♘f5 – too many threats. Black's lack of development is also felt in the event of 14...♘h6? 15 ♗xh6 gxh6 16 ♘f5 ♔f8; now White can target the unprotected kingside with 17 ♕d2!, and after 17...♘xf5 18 ♗xf5 ♔g7 19 ♖e4, his attack is very strong. He has superior forces in the sector where the black king is present, while Black's extra piece is an ineffectual bishop on c8.

14...h5!

It is essential to keep the knight on its active post, where it puts pressure on f2 and h2. This can be useful to deflect the white forces from the e-file at the right time. Now ...0-0 is a threat; the weakness created by ...h5 is a risk Black has calculated – he has enough defenders.

Now White must use some imagination to find a concrete way to maintain his initiative, as 15 ♘f5? ♗xf4 16 ♘xe7 ♗xh2+ is not to be feared – Black would then seal the open file with 17...♗e5.

15 b4?!

White tries to complicate the game and maintain the tension at all costs. He therefore opens more lines, driving the black queen away from the pressure against f2. However, Black has adequate resources to resist the onslaught thanks to his active pieces.

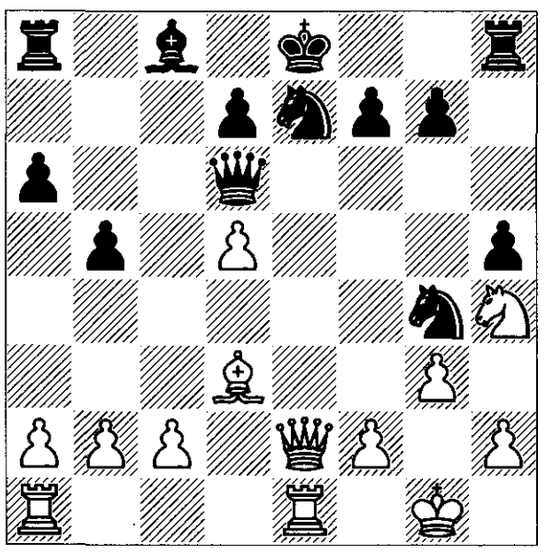
Ivanchuk analysed the position in depth. The reader interested in all the complex lines examined by the extraordinary Ukrainian player can find them in *Informator 93*. Here we shall mention only the more important ones.

There were two main continuations. One is 15 ♕f3, when Ivanchuk suggests 15...♗xf4! 16 ♕xf4 and here the very complex 16...g5, which according to his analysis is sound after 17 ♕f3 gxh4 18 d6 ♕xd6 19 ♕xa8 ♕xh2+ 20 ♔f1 ♔d8! (not 20...0-0?! 21 ♖xe7 ♕h1+ 22 ♔e2 ♕xa1 23 ♕e4!!, winning) 21 ♕a7 ♖h6!, with a winning position. Ivanchuk doesn't mention 17 ♕xg5, which should at least be considered – and perhaps even deserves preference. Ivanchuk's search for the truth in the position and his deep analysis are to be admired. From a practical viewpoint it's a different thing – going for brutal complications favours White, especially if there is a solid alternative, such as 16...d6, which also seems to withstand the onslaught. This is to be

preferred at the board because even for a top player it is difficult to work out all the complications deriving from 16...g5, of which we have only reproduced a tiny part.

White does better not to seek a mating attack (as he does in the game with 15 b4?!), but rather positional compensation for the piece. Ivanchuk points out the better 15 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 16 g3 *(D)*, threatening ♘f5.

B



16...♔d8 17 b3 (with the idea of playing c4; the black pieces become active enough in the event of 17 ♕f3 ♘e5 18 ♕f4 f6) 17...b4! (better than 17...♗b7 18 c4 ♖c8 19 ♖ac1, when White has reasonable compensation because the b7-bishop is out of play and because White's strong centre disrupts Black's coordination) 18 a3 bxa3 19 c4 ♗b7 20 b4, and Black's chances are only slightly better. He has managed something similar to the line against 17...♗b7, but at the expense of giving up another pawn – there could follow 20...a5, and then 21...f6 with a timely ...♘e5 to follow.

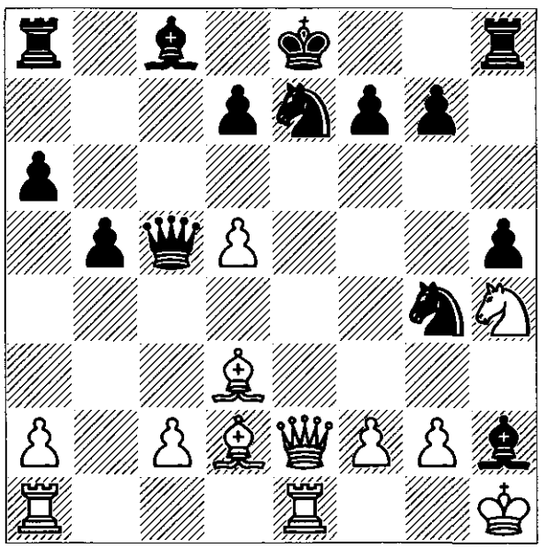
15...♕xb4 16 ♗d2 ♗xh2+ 17 ♔h1 ♕c5! *(D)*

White has compromised the black pieces but at the cost of two pawns. Black once more puts pressure on the weak point f2, something which he can use again to distract the white pieces from their attack.

18 f4

Against 18 ♘f5 Black has once more at his disposal the plug 18...♗e5!, when after 19 f4 ♕f2! 20 ♕xf2 ♘xf2+ 21 ♔g1 ♘xd3 22 cxd3 ♗xa1 Black gives back some of his extra

W



material and wins: 23 ♘xe7 ♗d4+ 24 ♔f1 ♔f8 25 ♗b4 ♗b7 26 ♘f5+ ♔g8 27 ♘xd4 ♗xd5.

18...♗g3

One of the reasons behind 15 b4 is the opening of the b-file, which didn't seem to have great relevance. However, now 18...g6 could be exploited with 19 ♖ab1!, threatening ♗b4.

19 ♘f5

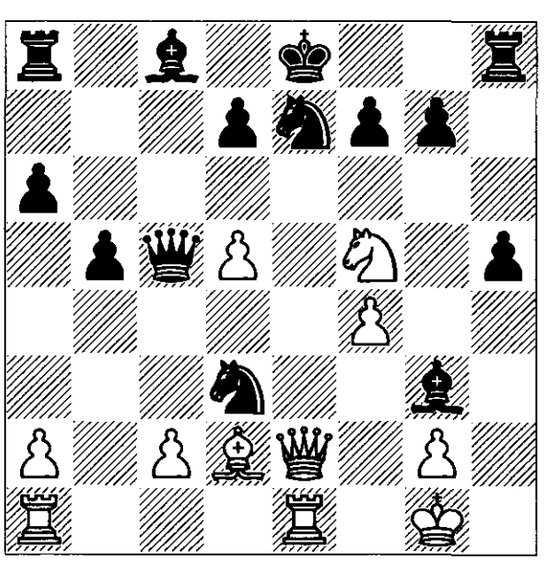
19 ♕xe7+ ♕xe7 20 ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 21 ♘f5+ ♔e8 22 ♘xg3 ♘f2+ 23 ♔h2 ♘xd3 doesn't work – Black is the exchange and a pawn up in a relatively quiet position.

19...♘f2+!

Black prefers to keep his bishop. In the event of 19...♗xe1 20 ♖xe1 0-0 (after 20...♘f2+ 21 ♔h2 Black should repeat, since 21...♘xd3? loses to 22 cxd3 ♗b7 23 d6!) 21 ♘xe7+ ♔h8 22 ♖f1, the black king is in a somewhat precarious situation – a possible idea would be ♕e1-h4.

20 ♔g1 ♘h3++ 21 ♔h1 ♘f2+ 22 ♔g1 ♘xd3+ *(D)*

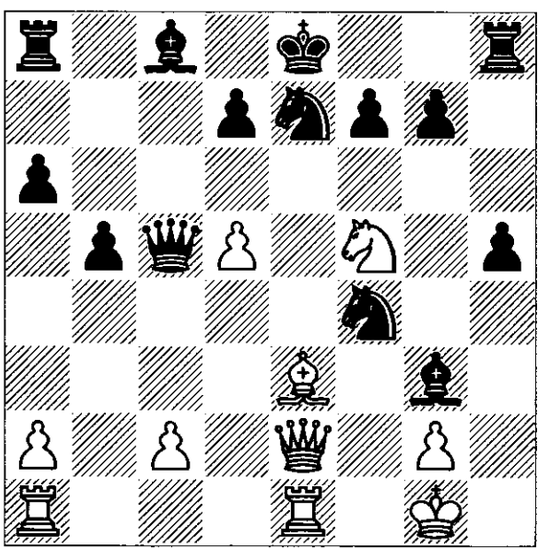
W



Of course Black wants more than just a draw. The complications will favour him because he has achieved a big material advantage and can give back part of it in order to simplify.

23 ♗e3 ♘xf4! *(D)*

Another strong blow. Ivanchuk points out that it is important not to underestimate White's activity. Thus 23...♕xd5?! is less clear-cut, despite threatening many things, due to 24 ♗d4!!. Then 24...♗h4? 25 ♕xe7+ ♗xe7 26 ♖xe7+ ♔f8 27 ♗xg7+ ♔g8 28 ♖e8+ ♔h7 29 ♖xh8+ ♔g6 30 ♗f8! ♔xf5 (30...♕xf5?? 31 ♖h6#) 31 ♖xh5+ ♔e4 32 ♖xd5 ♔xd5 33 ♖d1 leads to a balanced endgame, but the surprising 24...♘e5! 25 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 26 ♖xe5 ♗h4, while giving back much of the material advantage, retains an extra pawn and the better chances.



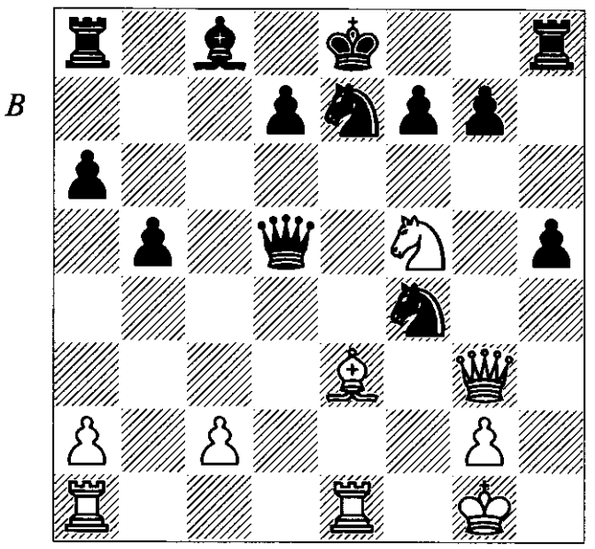
24 ♕f3

After 24 ♗xc5 ♘xe2+ 25 ♖xe2 d6, Black again gets a decisive material advantage if White ventures 26 ♖xe7+ ♔f8 27 ♘xd6 ♔xe7 28 ♘xc8+ ♔d8, and once more without significant complications. 26 ♘xe7 ♗g4 27 ♖e3 ♔d7 28 ♗d4 ♗f4 29 ♖e4 ♗g5 30 ♘c6 ♗f5 31 ♖e2 ♖he8 32 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 is also insufficient for White, as he is two pawns down, while Black has the bishop-pair and will soon infiltrate along the e-file.

24...♕xd5 25 ♕xg3 *(D)*

25...♘xf5!

Black is not afraid of the discovered check. This was not the only winning move but it was the most simple and elegant – practically any simplification favours Black.

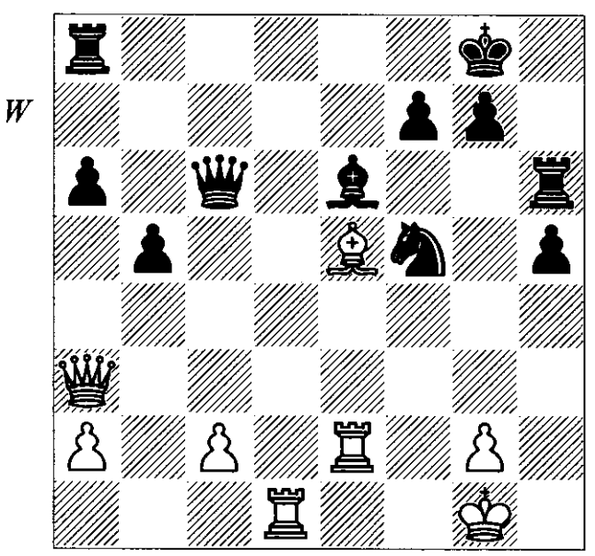


After the elimination of the strong f5-knight the rest is simple.

26 ♗xf4+ ♔f8 27 ♕a3+ d6 28 ♖ad1 ♕c6 29 ♖e2

29 ♗xd6+ ♔g8 doesn't change things.

29...♗e6 30 ♗xd6+ ♔g8 31 ♗e5 ♖h6 *(D)*



With this atypical culmination of Black's development, the fight is over.

32 ♖ed2 ♖g6 33 g3 ♔h7 34 ♖d8 ♕b6+ 0-1

In this case the attack created threats against the black king, which stayed in the centre for almost the entire game. However, the sacrifice proved premature and was refuted due to the fact that Black's pieces were very active, with decisive pressure against the points h2 and f2. This in all likelihood was not adequately taken into account by White when playing 11 ♘d5?!.

To show the unsoundness of the sacrifice, Black had to play accurately – the key moves

were 14...h5!, which allowed Black to keep his g4-knight active, 17...♕c5!, which hit again the weak point f2, and 23...♘xf4!, not letting himself be distracted by the tempting 23...♕xd5?.

Now we shall look at the spectacular game mentioned in the note to Black's 7th move, in which Sutovsky's opponent chose to initiate early complications:

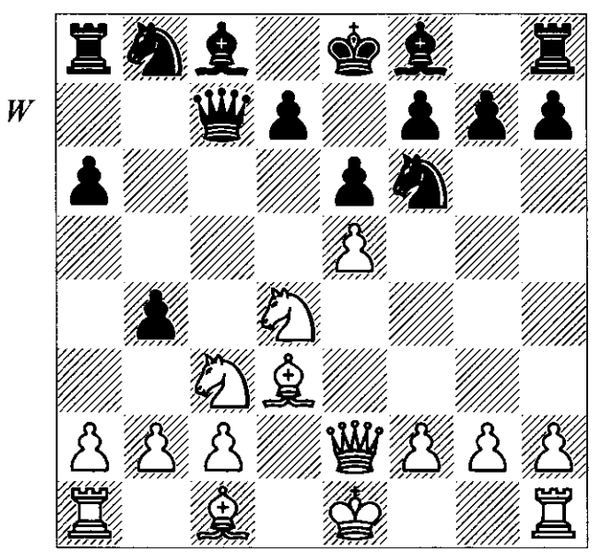
Supplementary Game 7.2

Emil Sutovsky – Abhijit Kunte

Pune 2004

Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♘c3 a6 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♕c7 6 ♗d3 ♘f6 7 ♕e2 b5?! 8 e5 b4 *(D)*



9 ♘cb5 axb5 10 ♘xb5! ♕b7

10...♕b6 is met by 11 ♗e3! ♗c5 12 ♘d6+ ♔e7 (Sutovsky) and now 13 ♕f3, or (possibly even better) 13 exf6+, with a strong initiative.

11 exf6 gxf6 12 ♗f4! ♖a5 13 ♗c4!

White defends a2 so that he can castle queenside, and the black king can feel the presence of the d1-rook. Black's seemingly solid central structure runs the risk of being demolished.

13...♘c6 14 0-0-0 b3! 15 cxb3! ♖xa2 16 ♔b1 ♖a5 17 ♖d5!

17 ♘c7+? ♔d8 18 ♗xe6? is refuted by 18...♘e5!, when Black captures a piece with advantage.

17...♗e7 18 ♖hd1

The build-up of forces against the black king is tremendous: the threat is 19 ♘c7+ ♔d8 20 ♖xa5 ♘xa5 21 ♗xe6! fxe6 22 ♘xe6+ ♔e8 23 ♕h5#.

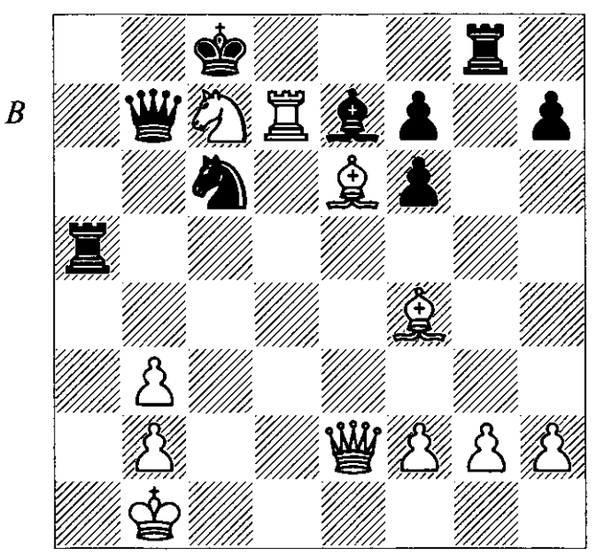
18...♖g8 19 ♘c7+?!

White very understandably continues with the attack, because it seems unlikely that the black king will survive. However, objectively, and with an analysis engine to assist, one can see that 19 g3! is better.

19...♔d8 20 ♖xd7+! ♗xd7 21 ♖xd7+ ♔c8

21...♔xd7 leads to mate after 22 ♗xe6+ fxe6 23 ♕xe6+ ♔d8 24 ♕xg8+ ♔d7 25 ♕e8#.

22 ♗xe6! *(D)*



22...♘e5?

In this crazy position Black goes wrong; the main variation, given by Sutovsky as leading to a drawn endgame, is 22...♖e5 23 ♗xe5 fxe6 24 ♖xe7! ♘xe7 25 ♗d6 ♕xb3! 26 ♘xe6 ♖xg2! 27 ♕a6+ ♕b7 28 ♕xb7+ ♔xb7 29 ♗xe7 ♖xh2 30 f4 h5 31 ♗xf6 h4.

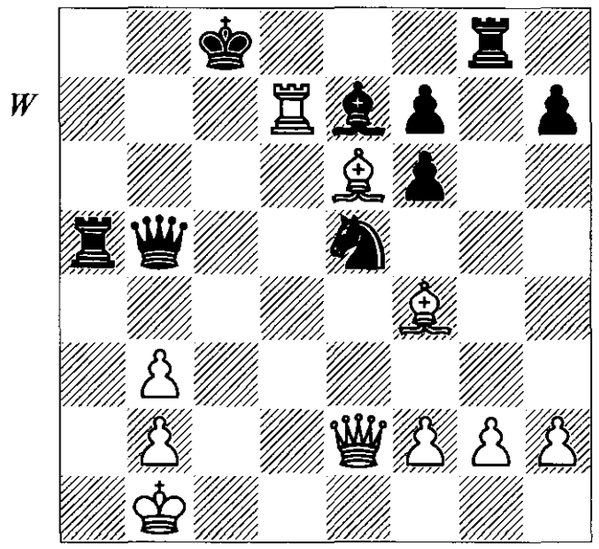
23 ♘b5!!

This magnificent move is decisive.

23...♕xb5 *(D)*

23...♘xd7 doesn't help: 24 ♕c4+ ♔d8 25 ♗c7+ ♔e8 26 ♗xf7+ ♔f8 27 ♗xg8, and mate; the two rooks are not enough defence either

after 23...fxe6 24 ♖xb7 ♔xb7 25 ♗xe5 fxe5 26 ♕xe5, winning more material.

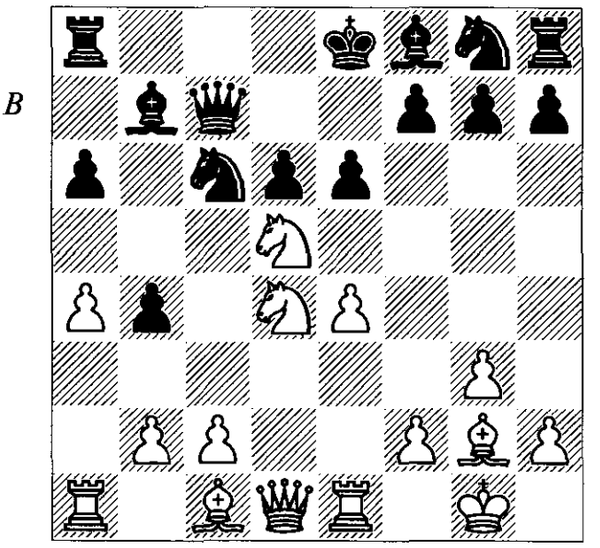


24 ♖d5+ fxe6 25 ♖xb5 ♖xb5 26 ♕xb5 ♖g6 27 ♕e8+ 1-0

By the way, does the reader think that the sacrifice ♘d5 is a modern idea? It might appear so, from at least the second half of the 20th century. And yet it is not. Its baptism of fire took place much earlier. Consider the following:

Richard Réti – Savielly Tartakower
Vienna 1919
Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♘c3 a6 4 g3 ♘c6 5 ♗g2 ♕c7 6 0-0 b5 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 ♗b7 9 ♖e1 d6 10 a4! b4 11 ♘d5! *(D)*



11...♕a5 12 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 13 ♕d4 ♘f6 14 ♗d2 e5 15 ♗xb4 ♕d8 16 ♘xf6+ gxf6 17 ♕d3 1-0

Prophylactic thinking is one of the keys to a successful defence. We shall devote a whole chapter to it but, needless to say, it appears in almost every game throughout all stages, right from the very opening.

In the next game Black responds to a new, very aggressive set-up, and finds himself unexpectedly in the midst of greater difficulties than in 'normal' positions. One crucial error was enough for his position to crumble.

It speaks well of the attacker because Andersson was very difficult to beat in the 1980s. In the main game that follows, we shall see another legendary Sicilian player handling the problems of the defence more effectively.

Supplementary Game 8.1

John van der Wiel – Ulf Andersson

Tilburg 1983

Sicilian Defence, Taimanov Variation

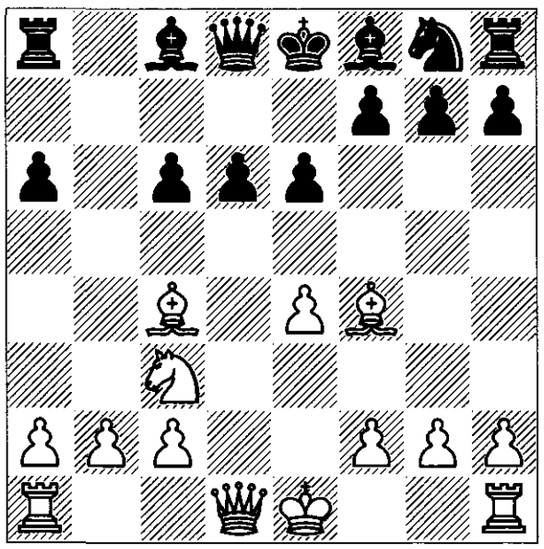
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗f4 d6 7 ♘xc6

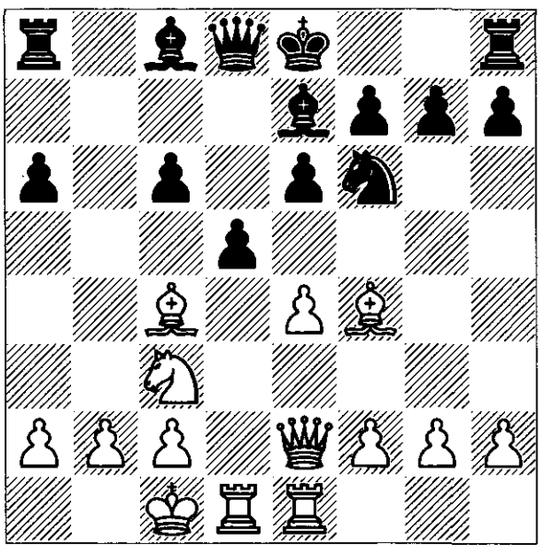
Strengthening the black centre is not the most advisable thing in general. White closes the c-file but opens the b-file – if he is planning to castle queenside, the change is not clearly beneficial. Nevertheless, White's idea is quick development and strong pressure along the central files, trying to prevent Black's central majority from making itself felt.

7...bxc6 8 ♗c4 *(D)*

8...♘f6

Black keeps developing. It was also possible to play in the centre with 8...d5, although White





would have continued along the general lines of his idea by playing 9 exd5 cxd5 10 ♕f3 followed by 11 0-0-0, when the sacrifice ♘xd5 is already in the offing because Black lags behind in development.

9 ♕e2

White carries on with his plan of quickly castling queenside and exerting pressure in the centre. The position of the queen on e2, eyeing the black king down the e-file, seeks to punish, or at least discourage, the natural central push ...d5.

9...♗e7

Another natural move. Black has two tasks: one is to bring his king to safety, and the other is to occupy the centre. In our main game (which follows after this one) we shall examine this position in some more depth.

10 0-0-0 d5

Black occupies the centre before castling because in the event of 10...0-0 11 ♖he1 it is not yet possible to play 11...d5? due to 12 exd5 cxd5 13 ♗xd5, winning a pawn. Here we can see the strength of White's centralized rooks.

11 ♖he1 *(D)*

11...♗b7

11...0-0? transposes to the previous note – and as we know, allows 12 exd5 cxd5 13 ♗xd5. Black therefore reinforces his d5-pawn before castling.

12 g4

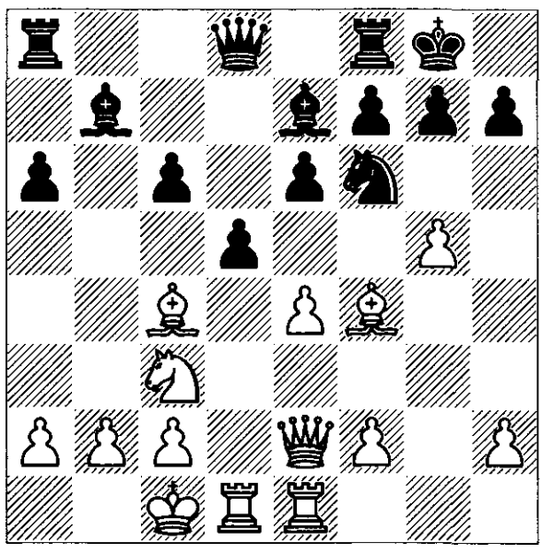
This is the next step. The centre is not closed – otherwise White would be guaranteed an attack without major obstacles – but it certainly is under control.

Given that the black king cannot stay in the centre for much longer, the game will become a struggle of attacks against kings castled on opposite sides. Therefore White immediately proceeds with his offensive on the kingside. It is worth noting that the b-file is practically useless as an avenue for Black's counterattack, partly because of White's f4-bishop, and partly because Black has blocked it for the time being with 11...♗b7.

12...0-0

As Van der Wiel indicates, Black could not solve his problems by unpinning the d-pawn with 12...♕a5?!. There would follow 13 g5 dxc4 14 gxf6 ♗xf6 (after 14...gxf6 15 ♕xc4 c5 the energetic sacrifice 16 ♘d5! totally demolishes Black's position) 15 e5 ♗e7 16 ♖g1 g6 17 ♕xc4, with advantage to White – there are many weak dark squares in Black's position.

13 g5 *(D)*



13...♘d7?

This natural move has a concrete drawback. But what should Black play instead? 13...♘e8?! disrupts the coordination of Black's pieces, and is rarely a satisfactory move in the Sicilian Defence. Van der Wiel then suggested 14 ♕h5, other possible options being 14 h4 or entering the complications deriving from 14 exd5 cxd5 15 ♗xd5!? (but not 15 ♘xd5?, which loses to 15...♗xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♗xg5!). It's unclear which path is better, but the fact that 13...♘e8?! is too passive is clear enough.

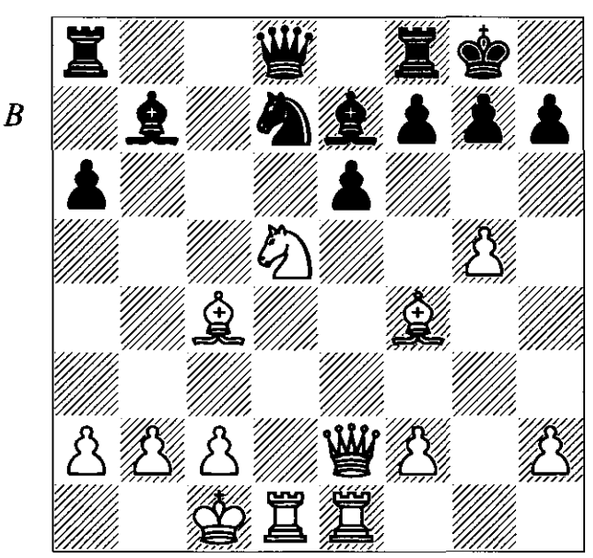
If Andersson had foreseen the extent of the problems he would face after the text-move, he might have resorted to tactics with the counter-attack 13...♗b4!, which achieves a reasonable position. Then White must avoid 14 gxf6? ♕xf6, which threatens both White's bishops and so wins back the piece with a good game. White should play 14 exd5, when 14...♘xd5! leaves Black's pieces well placed. Indeed, the capture with the knight is forced, for 14...♗xc3? loses to either 15 dxe6 or 15 dxc6, whereas 14...cxd5? 15 gxf6! ♕xf6 doesn't work for Black any more due to 16 ♗e5 ♕h6+ 17 f4 dxc4 18 ♖g1, keeping the strong e5-bishop with very active play.

14 exd5 cxd5

White wins material after 14...♗xg5 15 dxe6 ♗xf4+ 16 ♔b1.

15 ♘xd5! *(D)*

All of White's activity in the centre crystallizes after this blow.



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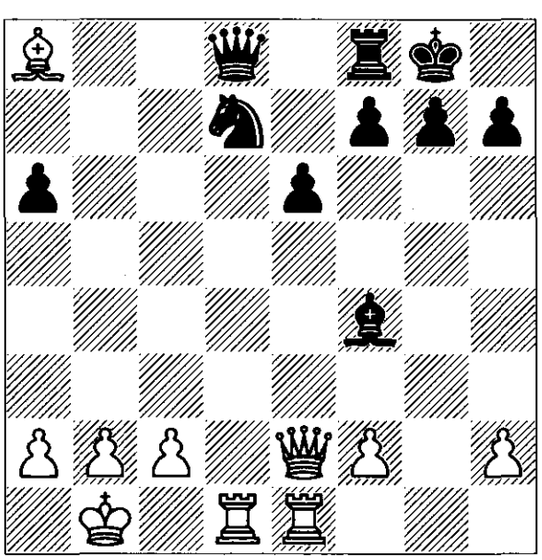
15...♗xd5

Black decides to give up the exchange, because after 15...♗xg5 16 ♕g4 ♗xf4+ 17 ♘xf4 he is forced to enter the endgame arising from 17...♘f6 18 ♖xd8 ♘xg4 19 ♖xa8 ♖xa8, when 20 ♘xe6! gives White the advantage; for example, 20...♘xh2 (or 20...♖e8 21 ♖g1!) 21 ♘c5 ♗c6 22 b4, and the a6-pawn is hanging. The threat is 23 ♖e7, after which White's queenside majority is ready to start rolling.

16 ♗xd5 ♗xg5

After 16...♖a7 the d5-bishop doesn't have to retreat yet. White may continue 17 h4 or 17 ♔b1, with an extra pawn. The strength of the white bishops means that after 17 h4 ♗b4 White can achieve more than the advantage he obtains by 18 c3 exd5 19 cxb4. He can instead play 18 ♗e4 ♗xe1 19 ♕xe1, when the threat is 20 ♕e3, and the black pieces are so badly placed – the pinned knight creates many problems – that White will win back the exchange with his structure intact.

17 ♗xa8 ♗xf4+ 18 ♔b1 *(D)*



B

18...♕c7

Black seeks counterplay along the b-file with the cooperation of his two minor pieces.

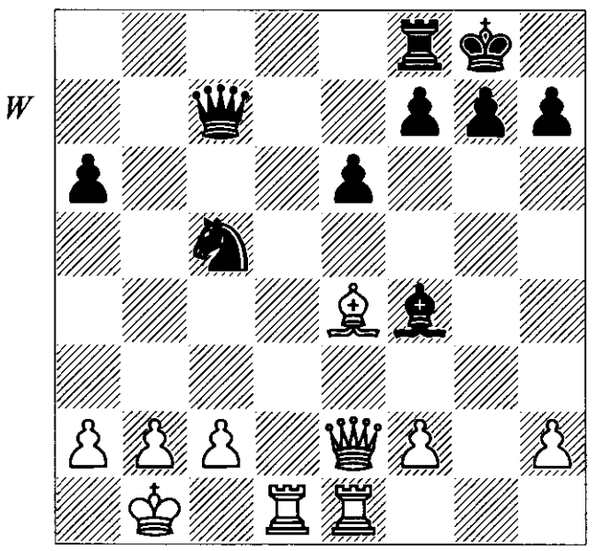
19 ♗e4!

Fighting against Black's positional threat. If now 19...♖b8, there would follow 20 ♗xh7+ and since 20...♔xh7? 21 ♕d3+ is not acceptable, Black would be forced to play 20...♔f8, when there are a plethora of possibilities. Rybka and Fritz are not afraid of the complications arising from 21 ♕d3 ♘c5 22 ♕d4 g6 23 ♕f6, or even 21 ♕xa6, but a human being would

choose 21 b3, closing the b-file before taking any other decision.

19...♘c5 *(D)*

Black keeps to his idea, only using a different move-order.



20 ♖d4!

White defends his castled king with the active rook. He could also use the queen for that task with 20 ♕c4.

20...♖b8 21 ♖c4 g6 22 c3?!

Preparing the timely advance b4, always with the utmost care. However, from both an objective and a practical perspective, it seems that 22 h4 was the best move.

22...a5?!

This move allows White to keep consolidating his material advantage. The capture of the pawn is also difficult to play, but 22...♗xh2!? wouldn't worsen Black's chances, given the fact that 23 b4?! is not to be feared – there could follow 23...a5! 24 a3 axb4 25 axb4 ♕e7 (or 25...♕a7). White does better to reply 23 ♕e3 ♗d6 24 ♖d1 ♗e7 25 ♕g3!?, keeping a clear advantage.

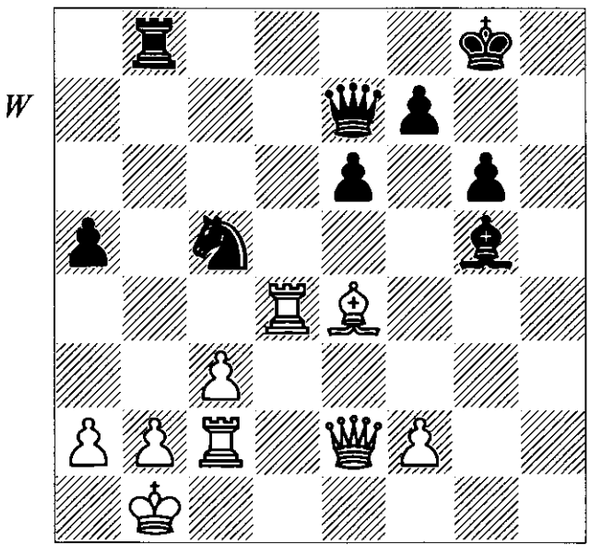
23 h4 ♕b6 24 ♖d1 ♗e5 25 ♖d2

25 ♗f3! is more harmonious, keeping everything protected, but the text-move also gives White the advantage.

25...♗f4 26 ♖c2 ♕d6 27 h5 ♗g5 28 hxg6 hxg6 29 ♖d4 ♕e7 *(D)*

30 ♗c6

White tries to neutralize the pressure on the b-file by closing it with his bishop, in order to switch later on to the offensive. Exchanging



queens would also have worked for him, as long as his queenside majority was not slower than Black's on the kingside.

30...♗f6 31 ♖d1 ♕c7 32 ♗b5 ♔g7 33 a4 ♖h8

If 33...♕f4, then 34 ♖g1, intending to answer 34...♕f5 with 35 ♕g4!.

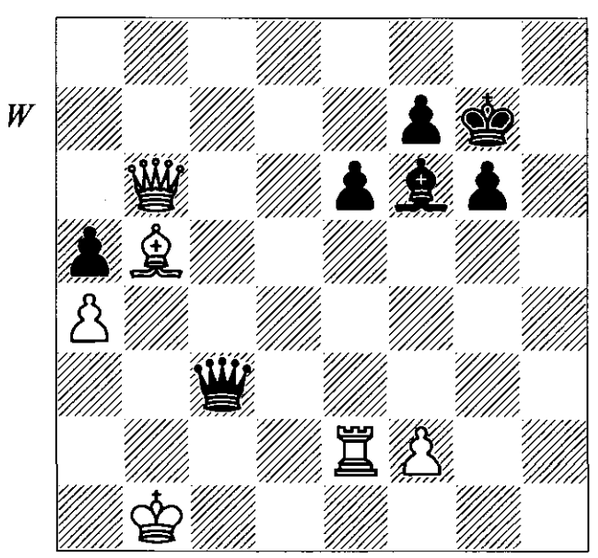
34 ♕f3 ♖h4 35 ♖h1 ♖xh1+ 36 ♕xh1 ♕f4 37 ♕c6 ♘e4 38 ♕b6

Black's position is very difficult to hold. Once the a5-pawn has fallen, White will have the advantage in the pawn race when the queens are exchanged.

38...♕f3 39 ♖e2 ♘xc3+?!

This sacrifice will be refuted with precise play. Also insufficient to hold the game were 39...♗xc3 40 ♕c6! ♘d2+ 41 ♔c2! and 39...♕f5 40 ♔a2.

40 bxc3 ♕xc3 *(D)*



41 ♕e3!

Despite the extra rook, accuracy is still required. With the text-move White controls the c1-h6 diagonal, which isn't the case after 41 ♕c6?! ♕b3+ 42 ♔c1 ♗g5+ 43 ♖d2 e5, which although still winning would be harder work.

Now Black can only postpone the inevitable.

41...♕a1+ 42 ♔c2 ♕b2+ 43 ♔d1 ♕a1+ 44 ♕c1 ♕d4+ 45 ♔e1 ♕g4 46 ♕e3 ♕g1+ 47 ♔d2 ♕g4 48 ♔d1 ♕g1+ 49 ♔c2 ♕g4 50 ♖d2 ♕h5 51 ♖d3 ♕g4 52 ♕f3 ♕g5 53 ♔d1 ♕e5 54 ♕e3 ♕h5+ 55 ♔e1 ♕h1+ 56 ♔e2 ♕h5+ 57 ♕f3 ♕g5 58 ♗e8!

The quickest – once the checks are under control White returns to the offensive, which is already decisive.

58...♔f8 59 ♗xf7!

Although Black's structure seems unassailable, with this nice blow White gets a decisive mating attack.

59...♔xf7 60 ♖d7+ ♔e8

Against 60...♔f8 the 'long move' 61 ♕a8+ wins.

61 ♕c6

And the discovered check is winning.

61...♕g4+ 62 f3 1-0

The game is a complete triumph of the ambitious set-up of the white pieces, which made the most of the pressure against the centre and the quick occupation of the central files.

Black's 13...♘d7? was a serious mistake. Although it seems the most logical move, his seemingly solid centre fell to pieces. "Beware of natural moves." (Réti).

Black overlooked the timely counterattack 13...♗b4!, which is based, among other factors, on tactical motifs brought about by the unstable position of the c4-bishop.

Game 8

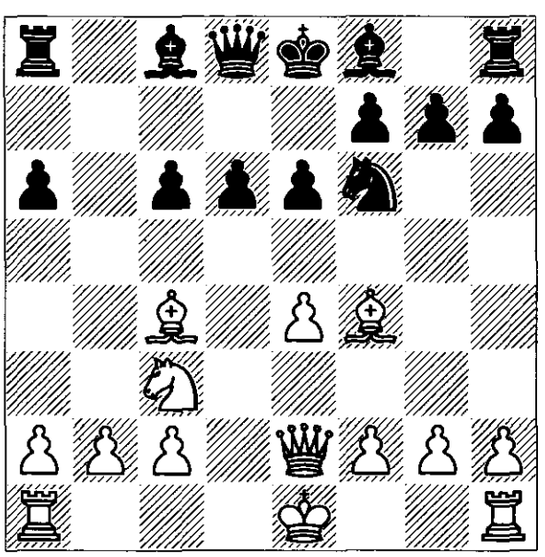
John van der Wiel – Lev Polugaevsky

Amsterdam 1984

Sicilian Defence, Taimanov Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗f4 d6 7 ♘xc6 bxc6 8 ♗c4 ♘f6 9 ♕e2 *(D)*

B



You will recall that the previous game continued 9...♗e7 10 0-0-0 d5 11 ♖he1 ♗b7 12 g4, after which Black had some problems to solve.

Trying to play ...d5 seems the most appropriate. Instead, 9...e5 doesn't prevent White from carrying on with his quick development: 10 0-0-0!, and now:

a) 10...exf4 is met by 11 e5, regaining the piece and opening up more lines; then 11...♕e7? doesn't work due to 12 ♕f3!.

b) 10...♘d7?! 11 ♗e3 ♗e7 is no solution either, as after 12 ♕g4! Black lags behind in development and 12...0-0? doesn't work because of 13 ♗h6 ♗f6 14 ♖xd6 ♘b6 15 ♗xf7+! ♔h8 (or 15...♔xf7 16 ♕h5+ g6 17 ♖xd8 gxh5 18 ♖xf8+, winning) 16 ♖xd8 ♗xg4 17 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 18 ♗e3!.

c) 10...♕c7 11 ♗g5 ♗e7 12 ♕d3 ♗g4 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♖df1 ♗e6 15 f4 exf4?! 16 ♘e2! ♖b8 17 ♘xf4 ♕b6 18 b3 ♗xc4 19 ♕xc4 leaves Black's structure so shattered that his king cannot find refuge, Fedorov-Cherepkov, Leningrad 1983. The result is that Black is in trouble both in the middlegame and in the ending.

White's set-up is very aggressive, although he yields the centre to Black and runs the risk of Black attaining a lasting central preponderance by ...d5.

The effectiveness of White's scheme is very much linked to tactical motifs. He must force Black into passivity. Were he not to accomplish this, Black's centre could neutralize his pieces, which would be forced to give up their active positions, the c4-bishop in particular, which exerted so much influence in the previous game.

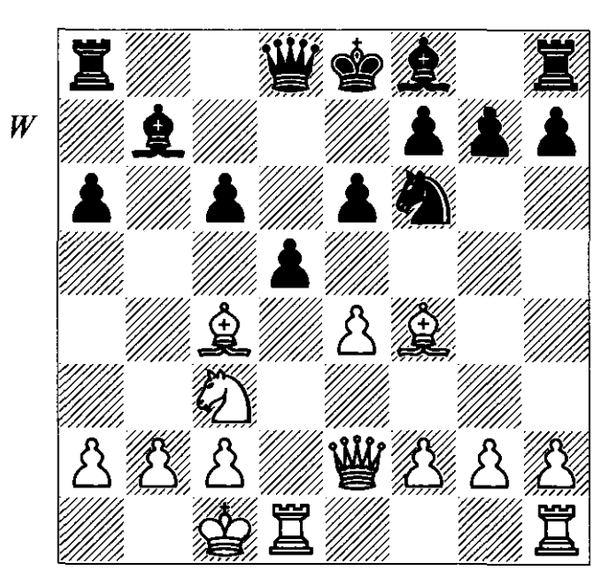
9...d5!

This game was played several months after the previous one so, unlike Andersson, the great 'Polu' wasn't taken by surprise. On the contrary he had familiarized himself with the position and he had found the best reply to White's ambitious plan.

First he carries out the 'forced' move, namely to occupy the centre, and postpones for the time being the development of the f8-bishop. Now that the a3-f8 diagonal has been opened, it has more options than the obvious ...♗e7.

This doesn't mean that the bishop must necessarily go to a place other than e7, rather that there are other possibilities depending on what White plays – "the threat is stronger than its execution" is not only an ingenious saying, but very often a true one.

10 0-0-0 ♗b7! *(D)*



We have practically the same position as before but now the d5-pawn is solidly defended, with the f8-bishop still to be moved.

How is White to respond to Black's move-order? If White tried 11 g4?!, as in the previous game, Black would show the virtues of his move-order by 11...♗b4!, preventing 12 g5? because of 12...♗xc3 and 13...♘xe4. The same would happen after 11 ♖he1, when the pin 11...♗b4 is annoying. And of course White's plans don't include playing e5: closing the central files would be inconsistent.

11 ♗b3

This is a small but significant victory for Black. In the previous game White didn't have to waste time on this move.

11...♗e7

As we mentioned, this is the safest place for the bishop, stopping any tactical motifs based on the opening of the e-file. Black has a simple plan – to finish his development and leave the b3-bishop inactive, aiming at a centre that has now become a rock.

11...♗b4 is risky due to 12 exd5 cxd5 13 ♗a4+, when 13...♘d7? is not possible because of 14 ♘xd5!, winning.

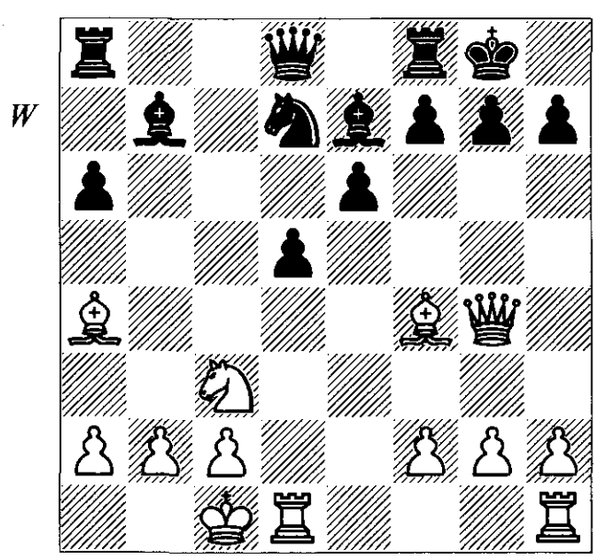
12 exd5

White seeks a solution to the future of the b3-bishop because the attacking race after 12 g4 0-0 13 g5 ♘d7 doesn't convince him. Black seems to achieve a comfortable position with ...a5 and ...♘c5.

12...cxd5 13 ♗a4+ ♘d7 14 ♕g4

After 14 ♖he1 a possible continuation is 14...0-0. Now that the a4-bishop is no longer hitting the point d5, 15 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 16 ♖xd5 would be an inadequate exchange sacrifice.

14...0-0 *(D)*



The opening has been a success for Black – he has completed his development and has a strong centre; his king is safe and his pieces harmoniously placed. There is little to show for White in exchange for all this.

15 ♗h6 ♗f6

The black pieces no longer only defend – now b2 is a clear target and the two half-open files leading to the white king begin to tell.

16 ♗xd7

To justify 13 ♗a4+, but now Black has a more comfortable game. Tactics don't come to White's assistance this time: if 16 ♘e4, there can follow 16...dxe4! 17 ♖xd7 ♕a5 18 ♗b3 ♕b5 19 ♖hd1 ♗d5!, and the white pieces are poorly placed.

16...♕xd7 17 ♖d3

Heading to the g-file, but Black has adequate defensive resources. Not very promising either was 17 ♘e4 ♗e5 18 ♘c5 (not 18 f4? f5!) 18...♕c7 and Black will soon launch a dangerous attack along the open files on the queenside. Moreover he has the possible blow ...f5, leaving the h6-bishop in danger.

17...♖ac8!

Preventing 18 ♖g3 due to 18...♖c4!, when after 19 f4 ♖fc8! 20 ♗xg7 there is 20...h5! 21 ♕xh5 ♗xg7, winning. In this line the absence of White's inactive h1-rook is felt.

17...♖fc8?! 18 ♘e4 ♗e5? is ineffective because White improves his situation with 19 ♗xg7!, since the f6-square is unprotected.

18 ♖e1 *(D)*

Now 18 ♘e4 ♗e5 19 ♗xg7? f5 is different – the f8-rook covers the f6-square.

How should Black continue now? White has prevented 18...♖c4? due to 19 ♕xc4. 18...♔h8, with advantage, is possible but Black is ready for a direct attack.

18...d4!

Driving away the defender of the a4-square. In the event of 19 ♘e4 there could follow

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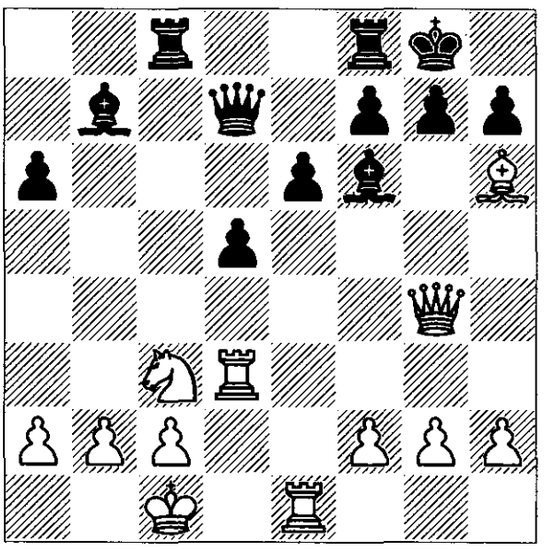


19...♗xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♕a4, infiltrating via a2, when Black's attack is decisive.

Let's note that White's combination ♗xg7, in order to play ♖g3 or ♖g4 afterwards, can be met if necessary with the *zwischenzug* ...h5!, misplacing the white queen, before playing ...♗xg7.

19 ♖ed1?

As insufficient as any other move – White's position is already untenable.

19...♕c7! 0-1

The pin of the c3-knight is decisive – 20 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 21 ♖g3 f5 doesn't work, nor does 20 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 21 ♖xd4 f5.

This short game is a good example of prophylactic thinking and the flexibility to choose the best position for the pieces.

Once the strong centre is stabilized with the more effective move-order 9...d5!, 10...♗b7! and 11...♗e7, Black neutralized the pressure on the central files and the point d5, which was so successful in the previous game. The b3-bishop was the worst affected. After 14...0-0 Black's position was clearly superior.

White's insistence in continuing with the attack led to a quick victory for Black. It could be said that this time defence and counterattack triumphed.

3 Fighting Blow by Blow

There's been a lot of talk about the connection of chess with noble arts such as music, but sometimes there is also a relation with other arts, not always so refined, such as boxing.

There are situations where without a clear mistake having necessarily been made, and without its justification being clear either, one of the players finds himself under attack, and in order to defend is forced to enter complications, whether accepting a sacrifice or making concessions such as moving an important piece away or weakening the position.

Sometimes it is not a pleasant decision, taken willingly, nor is it a 'normal' continuation. Its consequences are not clear, but failing to take the critical path is even worse, so one is forced to counterattack, fighting fire with fire.

The next game is a good example of this.

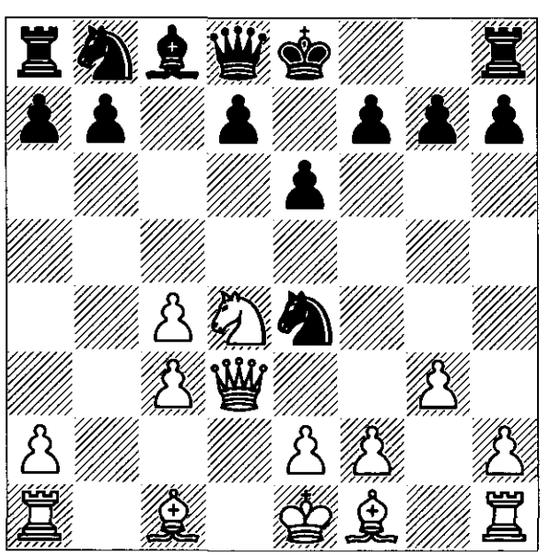
Game 9

Peter Heine Nielsen – Vasily Ivanchuk

Capablanca Memorial, Havana 2007

Nimzo-Indian Defence, Fianchetto Variation

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 ♘c3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4 6 g3 ♘e4 7 ♕d3 ♗xc3+ 8 bxc3 *(D)*



Black has seriously weakened White's structure at the cost of conceding several tempi, opening up lines to White's advantage and giving up the bishop-pair. Black will in the future put pressure on the doubled pawns and White will try to exploit his greater mobility – the bishop-pair can make a difference. It is a typical fight between a permanent advantage and a dynamic one.

It was possible to achieve the same thing and keep the dark-squared bishop with 7...♘xc3, but a knight on c5 is more useful than a passive bishop on e7.

8...♘c5 9 ♕f3

Hindering the development of the c8-bishop with 9...b6, which could have followed after any other queen move such as 9 ♕e3.

9...d6

Following classical precepts, Black places his central pawns on dark squares. Curiously enough, before this game Ivanchuk and Nielsen had already played this very same position, but with colours reversed.

10 ♗a3

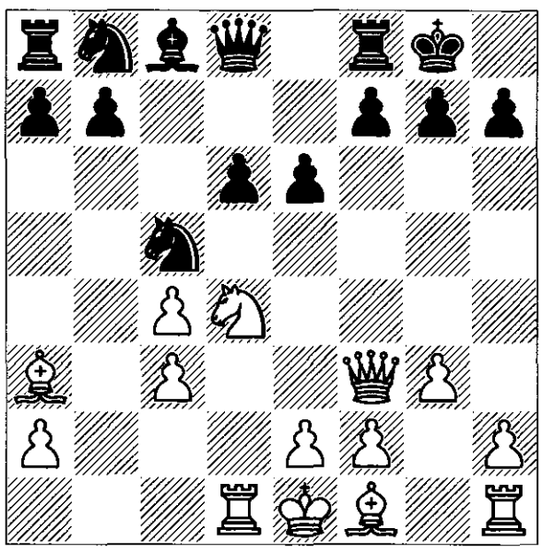
This is the start of a very ambitious plan, trying to put pressure on the black centre quickly. It is more usual to continue with the development of the kingside by 10 ♗g2 ♘bd7 11 0-0, which has been played many times in master games.

In Supplementary Game 9.1, Topalov-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008, we shall briefly see

an example of how dangerous White's initiative on the kingside can be.

10...0-0 11 ♖d1 *(D)*

A novelty by Nielsen. 11 ♗g2 had been played, while Ivanchuk suggested a very different set-up with 11 ♘b3!?.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White is delaying the development of the kingside to increase the pressure of the a3-bishop and the d1-rook against the weak d6-pawn in particular. The d4-knight can also join in the attack; e.g., 11...♘bd7? 12 ♘b5. In any case the jump ♘b5 is one of White's ideas. The direct threat is 12 ♗xc5 and 13 ♘xe6 – how should Black meet this idea?

It is possible to play 11...♘ba6, and then ...♗d7 and ...♗c6, but it is clear that the knight is not ideally placed on a6 – it isn't a very ambitious move.

11...♕a5!

Black counterattacks on the queenside, trying to prove the a1-rook has moved away from there prematurely. It is not an obvious move because it leaves the d6-pawn to its fate – for the enjoyment of the white knight – and must have required deep analysis.

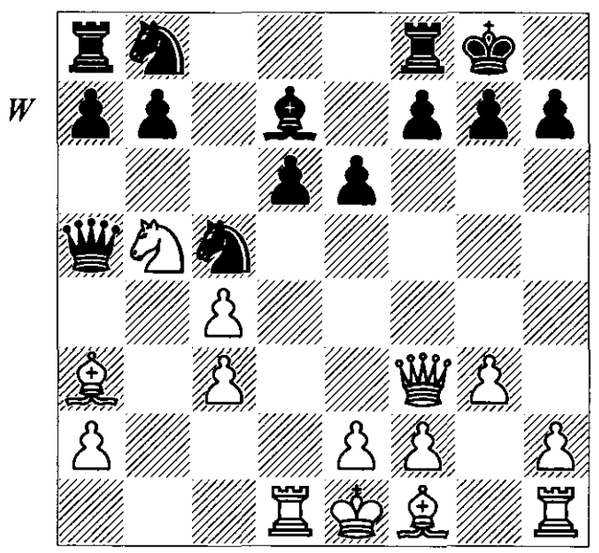
12 ♘b5

White accepts the challenge. Giving up the dark-squared bishop with 12 ♗xc5 would be a mini-defeat: besides 12...♕xc5, again attacking White's doubled pawns, Black could win a pawn for insufficient compensation with a line given by Ivanchuk: 12...dxc5 13 ♘b3 (if 13 ♘b5, Black can play 13...♗d7 14 e4 ♗c6, followed by ...♘d7, when White's pieces lack coordination and his pawn weaknesses start to tell) 13...♕xa2 14 ♘xc5 ♕xc4 15 ♕e3 ♘c6.

12...♗d7! *(D)*

A strong blow seeking to exploit White's lack of kingside development – the threat of 13...♗c6 is serious. This move allows White to win the exchange, but Black hopes that the tempi White must expend to capture the rook will compensate for this, and in particular leave the white king as a target in the centre.

Again this is more ambitious than 12...♘ba6.


W

13 ♗b4?!

White chooses to win material, although of course the delay in bringing the king to safety is significant.

Instead of this capture of material, Ivanchuk noted that it was better to finish development at any cost; e.g., 13 ♗xc5 dxc5 14 e4 ♗c6 15 ♘d6 ♘d7 16 ♕e3 ♘b6 17 ♗e2! ♘a4 18 ♖d3 ♖ad8 19 0-0 ♘xc3 20 ♗h5! ♘a4 21 e5, when the strong d6-knight together with the greater freedom of movement compensate for the pawn.

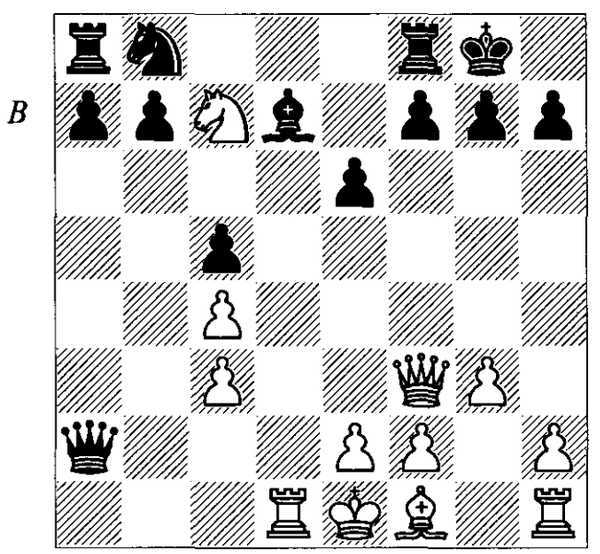
13...♕xa2 14 ♗xc5

This is consistent although somewhat reckless. In *Informator 100* Ivanchuk considered other possibilities but none is entirely satisfactory. For instance, after 14 ♖xd6?! ♗c6 15 ♕f4 ♘ba6 16 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 17 f3 ♕a5 18 ♗g2 ♘a4 Black wins a pawn at the very least.

White manages to end up level on material with 14 ♘xd6 ♗c6 15 e4 ♘bd7 16 ♗g2, but after 16...♘b3 (threatening to win with 17...a5) 17 ♕e2 ♕xe2+ 18 ♔xe2 a5 the passed pawn, virtually an extra pawn, gives Black the advantage.

14...dxc5 15 ♘c7 *(D)*

There is no turning back. Closing the long diagonal with 15 e4 yields Black the initiative. He can complete his development with 15...♘c6! since 16 ♖xd7? is impossible due to 16...♘e5 17 ♕d1 ♘xd7 18 ♕xd7? ♖ad8, winning. White's development is not satisfactorily completed with 16 ♗g2 because of 16...♘e5 17 ♕e2 ♕xe2+ (retreating the queen is also good, but without queens the doubled pawns cannot be supported) 18 ♔xe2 ♖fd8 19 ♘d6 ♗a4! 20 ♖d2 ♘xc4! 21 ♘xc4 ♗b5.



Now Black would have compensation after 15...♗c6 16 e4 ♘d7 – he is a pawn up, a passed pawn at that, and the white structure has weaknesses, but "if you see a good move, look for an even better one".

15...♗a4!

The white rook is forced to stay on the first rank so it will be left hanging, worsening White's position and becoming a tactical weakness.

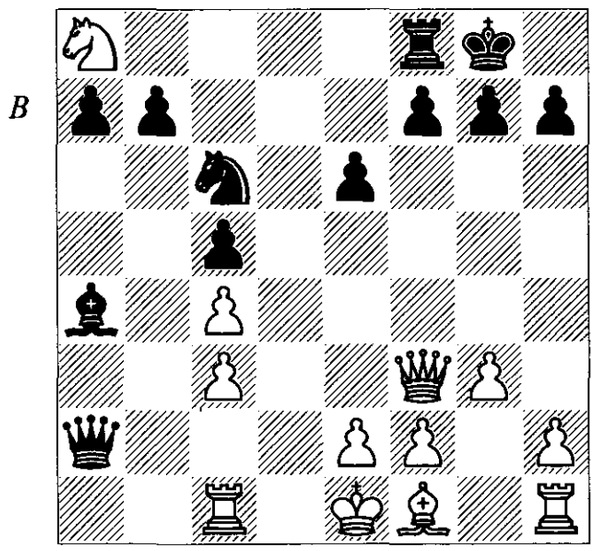
16 ♖c1

16 ♘xa8 ♗xd1 doesn't work – White needs too many tempi to bring both his king and knight to safety, and ...♘c6-e5 is imminent.

16...♘c6

Also tempting was 16...♗c6 17 e4 ♕a3 18 ♕e3 (if 18 ♖d1, the switchback 18...♗a4! is now winning; e.g., 19 ♘xa8 {if 19 ♖b1, then 19...♗c2 wins} 19...♗xd1 20 ♕xd1 ♕xc3+ 21 ♕d2 ♕f3 22 ♖g1 ♘c6, with a winning attack; Black threatens the a8-knight, as well as 23...♖d8 and the entry of the c6-knight; 23 ♕e2? loses to 23...♘d4!) 18...♗xe4 19 ♖g1 ♘c6 20 ♘xa8 ♖xa8 21 ♗e2 a5.

17 ♘xa8 *(D)*



What is the strongest continuation for Black now?

Obviously the knight can be captured but this would be an immense relief for White, who would complete his development after 17...♖xa8? 18 ♗g2 ♖d8, when he is in time to play 19 0-0.

It is possible to anticipate this with 17...♖d8, threatening 18...♕d2#. Then 18 ♕e3 is forced and after 18...♘a5 the move 19 ♗g2? loses to 19...♘xc4, but surprisingly White holds with 19 ♗h3!, when against 19...♘xc4? the move 20 ♗xe6! is effective. Black can get some advantage by playing 19...♘b3 instead, although after 20 0-0 ♘xc1 21 ♖xc1 ♖xa8 22 ♕xc5 ♕xe2 23 ♗g2, unlike other positions in which Black's passed pawn gave him a tangible advantage, here White is much more actively placed.

This would be the result of the first 'sounding' of the position but this last variation can provide us with a clue of what is the strongest continuation.

What would you play?

17...♕a3!

Again using the helpless rook to increase the advantage. The tempo ...♖d8 is not needed to force ♕e3, and it is better for the queen to step off the a2-g8 diagonal, avoiding the move 20 ♗xe6! of the previous note.

18 ♕e3

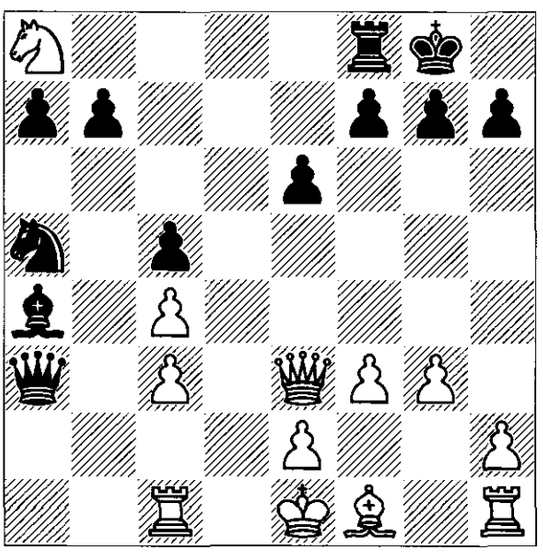
18 ♕f4 e5 19 ♕e3 leads to a position similar to the one in the game, whereas 18 ♖b1 loses to 18...♗c2; e.g., 19 ♗g2 ♗xb1 20 0-0 ♗a2 21 ♘c7 ♗xc4.

18...♘a5! 19 f3 *(D)*

Vacating the f2-square for the king and thus preventing mate.

19 ♗g2 ♘xc4 is not possible: the queen cannot defend the c1-rook, whose capture leads to mate.

B



19...♘xc4 20 ♕f4 b5!

Threatening to win the rook by 21...e5.

21 ♖b1 ♕xc3+

This is the third pawn to fall – Black is a rook down, but not for long.

22 ♔f2 ♘d2 23 ♖e1 ♖xa8

The outcome is now beyond doubt – the three pawns for the exchange are passed ones.

24 ♗g2 c4 25 ♕c7 ♕d4+ 26 e3 ♕d8 27 ♕e5 ♖c8 28 ♕c3 ♕d3 29 ♕a5 c3 30 ♖e2 ♘b3 31 ♕xa7 c2 0-1

White's set-up with 10 ♗e3 and 11 ♖d1 was very ambitious, putting strong pressure on the d6 point, but with the counterattack begun by 11...♕a5! and 12...♗d7! Black highlighted the drawback of White's plan, getting counterplay on the queenside itself. He also had a lead in development. White could not get his king to a good shelter with the necessary speed.

For the idea to be successful, Black had to resort to tactics, with a beautiful variety of tactical finesses, such as the *zwischenzugs* 15...♗a4! and 17...♕a3!.

Supplementary Game 9.1

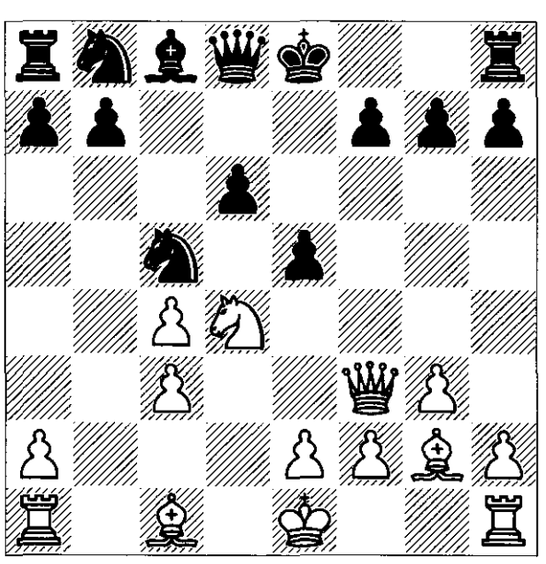
Veselin Topalov – Levon Aronian

Morelia/Linares 2008

Nimzo-Indian Defence, Fianchetto Variation

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 ♘f3 c5 5 g3 cxd4 6 ♘xd4 ♘e4 7 ♕d3 ♗xc3+ 8 bxc3 ♘c5 9 ♕f3 d6 10 ♗g2 e5 *(D)*

W



Here, instead of the previously used 11 ♘b3 or 11 ♘f5, White introduced a novelty.

11 ♕e3

"The threat is stronger than its execution" – this provides more strength to the future ♘b3 because of the pressure on c5.

11...0-0

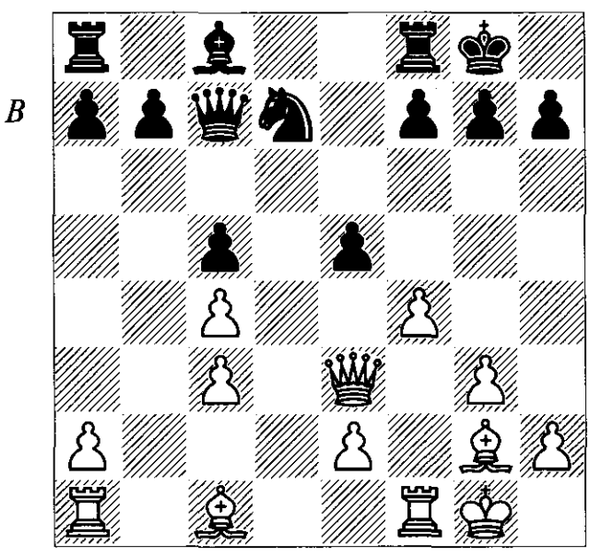
If Black wants to imitate his opponent's play, anticipating ♘b3 with 11...♘ba6, there follows another of White's ideas, 12 f4!, which gave him the advantage in Gajewski-Macieja, Lublin 2008 after 12...♕e7 13 ♘c6! ♕d7 14 ♘b4 0-0 15 ♘xa6 ♘xa6 16 fxe5, when he managed to open up the position: his g2-bishop is powerful and he will be able to exert annoying

pressure along several files – the b-file, targeting b7, the f-file, and the two central files – whereas Black's better structure is not so important, as his pieces lack coordination. After 16...♖e8 17 0-0 ♖xe5 18 ♕d4 ♘c5 19 ♗d5 ♘e6 20 ♕f2 ♕e7 21 ♖b1 White had a clear advantage, which he eventually converted into victory.

12 ♘b3 ♕c7 13 ♘xc5!

Closing the c-file decreases the weakness of the doubled pawns.

13...dxc5 14 0-0 ♘d7 15 f4! *(D)*



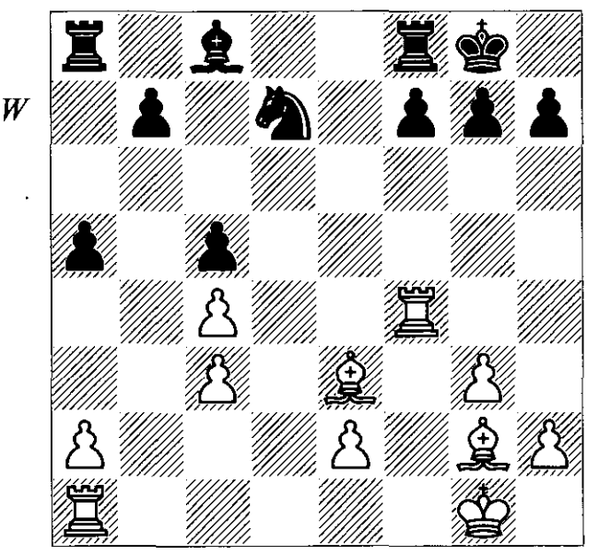
15...exf4

Played after long reflection. 15...♖e8 was suggested as an improvement, but Black's position is fragile anyway.

16 ♖xf4 a5 17 ♕e7

Threatening 18 ♗d5. The white pieces can very easily occupy active positions, even ideal ones, while Black has a serious problem with his queenside.

17...♕e5 18 ♕xe5 ♘xe5 19 ♗e3 ♘d7 *(D)*



20 ♖e4!

Heading to e7 – the rook used the f-file as a springboard. Black's position is now very difficult to defend. The game concluded:

20...♖a6 21 ♖b1 ♖g6 22 ♖e7 b6 23 ♗f4 h5 24 ♗e4 ♖e6 25 ♖xe6 fxe6 26 ♗d6 ♖f6 27 ♖d1 ♔f7 28 ♗f4 ♔g8 29 ♗c7 ♖f7 30 ♗g6 a4 31 ♗xh5 ♘f6 32 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 33 ♗xb6 ♗a6 34 ♗xc5 e5 35 a3 ♗xc4 36 ♗b4 e4 37 ♔f1 1-0

The Chigorin Variation of the Ruy Lopez is one of the oldest lines that are still popular today. Many attacking plans have been used and many ways to oppose them have been found. The next game is a masterclass in defence based on a profound knowledge of the position.

Game 10

Isaak Boleslavsky – Vasily Smyslov

Staunton Memorial, Groningen 1946

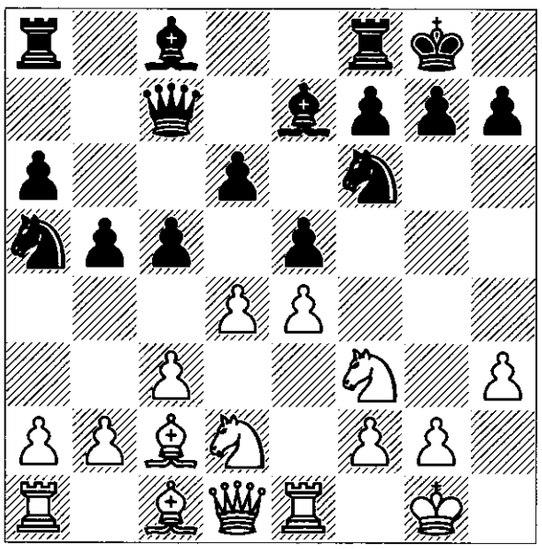
Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Chigorin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘a5 10 ♗c2 c5 11 d4 ♕c7 12 ♘bd2 *(D)*

12...♗d7

This is one of the oldest positions still to be played at master level so the following comment made by Smyslov after his move may sound somewhat strange: "12...♘c6 is also played here to clarify the position in the centre. In that case Black must reckon with Rauzer's plan 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♘f1, when the knight threatens to occupy the weak squares d5 or f5.

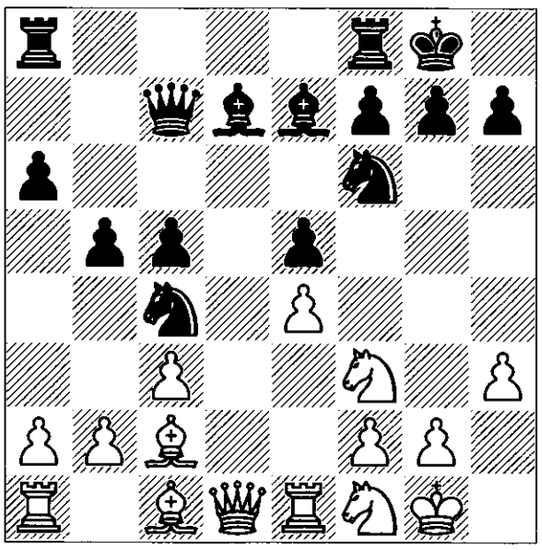
"The text-move completes Black's development and keeps in reserve the manoeuvre



...♘c4-b6. The knight is well placed on b6 for the defence of d5." Clearly this is an opinion that cannot be shared by other masters, but it is the vision of a world champion and great expert on this position in particular. In Supplementary Game 10.1, we see an example of what his comment suggests.

13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♘f1 ♘c4 *(D)*

Smyslov follows his original idea. 14...♖ad8 has been played too.



15 b3 ♘b6 16 a4?!

Instead of the more solid 16 ♕e2 (Smyslov), White carries out this typical break, very common in the Ruy Lopez. It creates pawn-tension that generally suits White, who can open up the a-file at a convenient time, weakening Black's queenside.

Nevertheless, in this particular position, it is questionable.

16...c4!

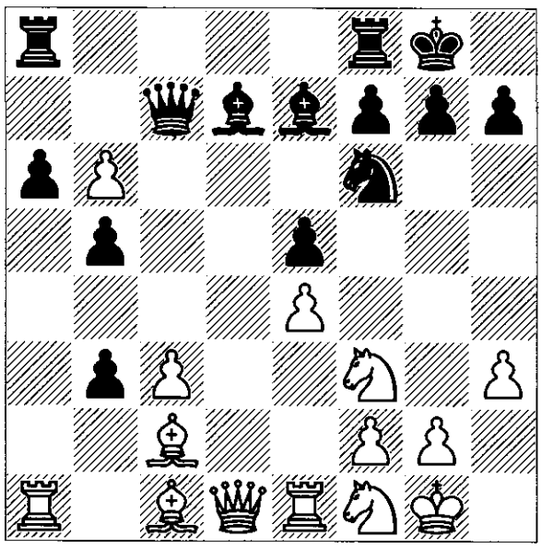
Counterattack!

17 a5

17 b4 not being possible, White must enter the complications. 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 is also awkward – the opening of the a-file is premature and it is Black who comes out on top.

17...cxb3 18 axb6 *(D)*

18 ♗xb3 is met by 18...♘a4, when after both 19 ♗xa4 bxa4 and 19 c4 ♗b4! 20 ♗d2 ♗xd2 21 ♕xd2 ♘c5, Black is slightly better.



And now? There is little to argue against 18...bxc2 19 bxc7 cxd1♕ 20 ♖xd1 ♖fc8 21 ♘xe5 ♖xc7 22 ♗f4 ♖b7, with a level game. Can Black aim for more?

18...♕xc3

This is the way to try for an advantage, and it leads to major complications. White is granted a pawn on the sixth rank, which has no relevance right now but in the future it might.

19 ♗xb3!

This exchange sacrifice leads to huge complications. After the quieter 19 ♗b2 White ends up in a dubious position; e.g., 19...♕xc2 20 ♗xe5 ♕xd1 21 ♖exd1 ♗c8. Black is a pawn up and the b6-pawn is a weakness which can be attacked with ...♘d7 or ...♗d8, depending on how White defends his e4-pawn.

19...♕xa1

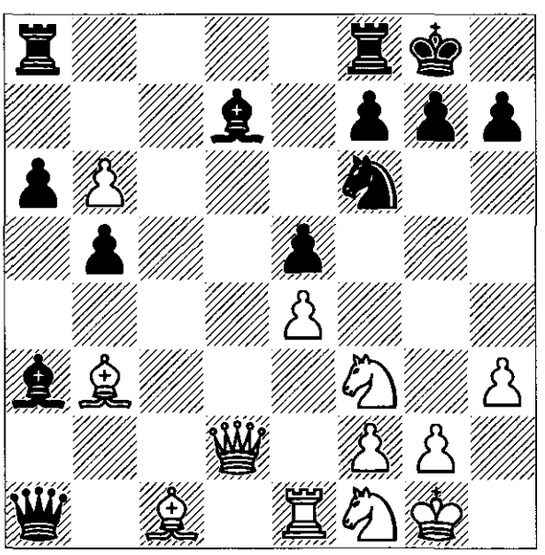
The queen is now in a precarious situation.

20 ♕d2

White threatens 21 ♗b2. The game is at a very critical moment. There are two options, 20...b4 and 20...♗a3.

20...♗a3! *(D)*

It was very risky to play 20...b4. After 21 ♗b2 ♕a5 22 ♘xe5 White obtains a dangerous attacking position. Smyslov gave 22...♗e6? 23 ♘c6 ♕c5 24 ♖c1, winning material, and 22...♗b5?! 23 ♘xf7! ♖xf7 24 ♗xf6! ♖d8 (or 24...gxf6 25 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 26 ♕d5+, winning) 25 ♗d4, when Black cannot exploit the pin and White keeps his material advantage. Rybka suggests 22...♖ad8!, with an unclear position, but of course it is very difficult to find one's way out in this position without having an analysis engine as an adviser.



Now it's White's turn to make a critical decision.

21 b7?!

"A rash advance. White prepares an attacking manoeuvre with his queen, which, however, has its refutation." (Smyslov).

Better is 21 ♗a2!, when 21...♗b4 22 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 23 ♕xb4 ♖e8 24 b7 (now the advance succeeds in distracting the black forces) 24...♗c6 25 ♗a3 ♕a2 26 ♘xe5 results in a complex game with roughly equal chances. Black could aim higher with 21...♗e6, but it is not clear whether this is any better after 22 ♗xa3 ♕xa2 23 ♕xa2 ♗xa2 24 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 25 ♘xe5 ♖e8 26 f4 (but not 26 ♖a1?! ♖xe5 27 ♖xa2 b4 28 ♖xa6 ♖b5, with the better ending for Black).

21...♖ab8 22 ♗a2 ♗e6 23 ♗xe6

White's position is untenable after 23 ♗xa3 ♕xa2 24 ♕xa2 ♗xa2 25 ♗xf8 ♔xf8.

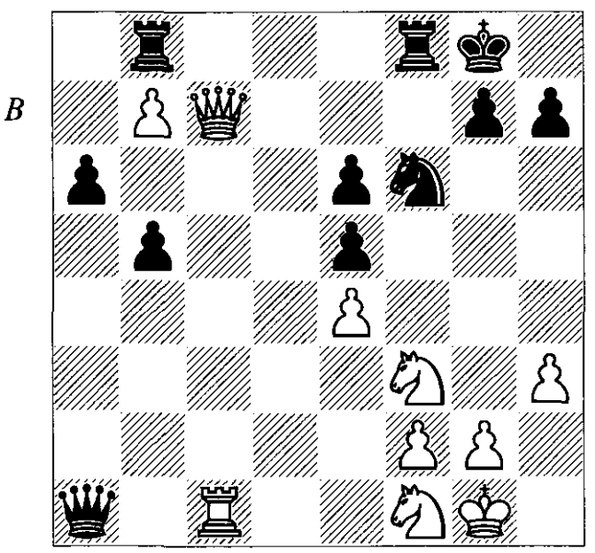
23...fxe6 24 ♕a5 ♗b2!

"It is a rare sight to see pieces cooperating so excellently in the very heart of the opponent's position" (Smyslov). This move required precise calculation.

Instead 24...b4? spoils the piece coordination – there would follow 25 ♗d2 ♕b2 26 ♕xa6.

25 ♕c7 ♗xc1 26 ♖xc1 *(D)*

It is not possible to exploit the absence of the black queen with 26 ♘g5 because Black manages to bring it back in time by 26...♕d4 27 ♘xe6 ♕d7 – this also works against 27 ♖xc1.



26...♖xb7!

The key – White's greatest trump, his pawn on the seventh rank, falls and Black converts his material advantage.

27 ♕c6 ♖b6 28 ♕c7 ♕a3 29 ♕xb6 ♕xc1 30 ♕xa6

No better is 30 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 31 ♕xa6 (or 31 ♘xe5 ♕c7, followed by the advance of the b-pawn, as Smyslov points out) 31...♕c5, and Black wins.

30...♘xe4 31 ♕xb5 ♘xf2!

And finally it is Black who wins through attack.

32 ♘xe5

Of course 32 ♔xf2 is met by 32...e4.

32...♕g5 33 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 34 ♔g1 ♘xh3+ 0-1

There follows 35 gxh3 ♕f2+ 36 ♔h1 ♕xf1+.

The break 16 a4?! proved hasty and allowed Black a comfortable game thanks to the counterblow 16...c4! but instead of settling for just a balanced game, he went for complications with 18...♕xc3, which was met by the sharp 19 ♗xb3!. In order to punish the rash advance 21

b7?! Black had to resort to his best defensive arts with 20...♗a3! and 24...♗b2!, and 26...♖xb7! afterwards, which had to be foreseen much earlier.

Supplementary Game 10.1

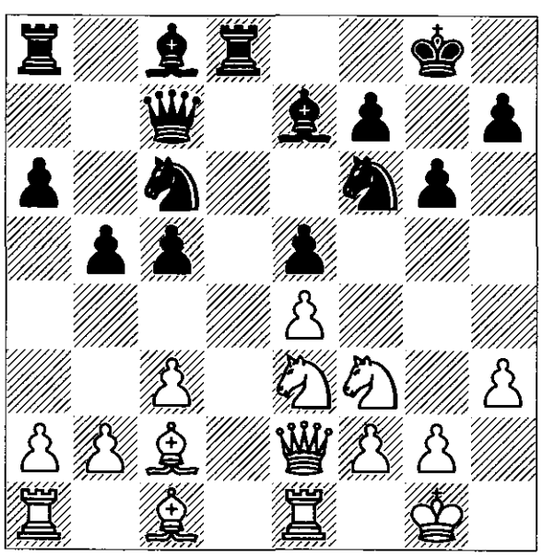
Mikhail Tal – Yuri Averbakh

Riga 1961

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Chigorin Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘a5 10 ♗c2 c5 11 d4 ♕c7 12 ♘bd2 ♘c6 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 ♘f1 ♖d8 15 ♕e2 g6 16 ♘e3 *(D)*

B



Although Black has controlled the f5-square, this is getting closer to what Smyslov was describing in the comment cited in the note to Black's 12th move in the main game.

16...♖b8

Black anticipates the typical break a4, so White brings his forces to the other flank.

17 ♘g5!

The f7-square is the goal.

17...♗f8 18 ♕f3 ♗g7 19 ♘d5 ♕d6?!

19...♘xd5 is better. What now follows is quite forced.

20 ♗e3 h6 21 ♘xf6+

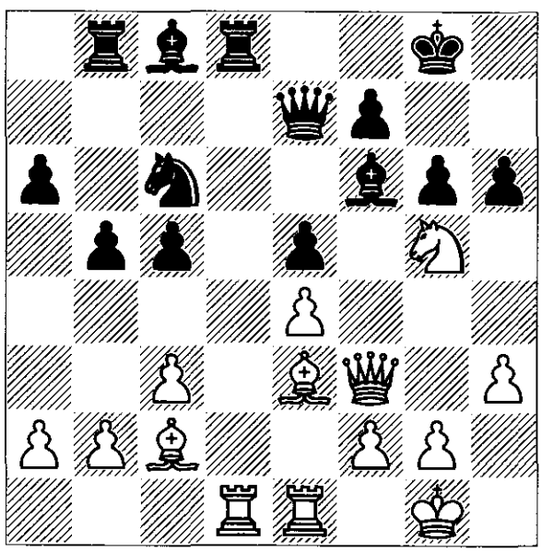
We see the d5-knight exchanged for the f6-knight, weakening the black king's position, and not for the b6-knight as Smyslov said.

21...♗xf6

After 21...♕xf6 22 ♕xf6 ♗xf6 23 ♘f3 White wins a pawn.

22 ♖ad1 ♕e7 *(D)*

W



23 ♗xc5!!

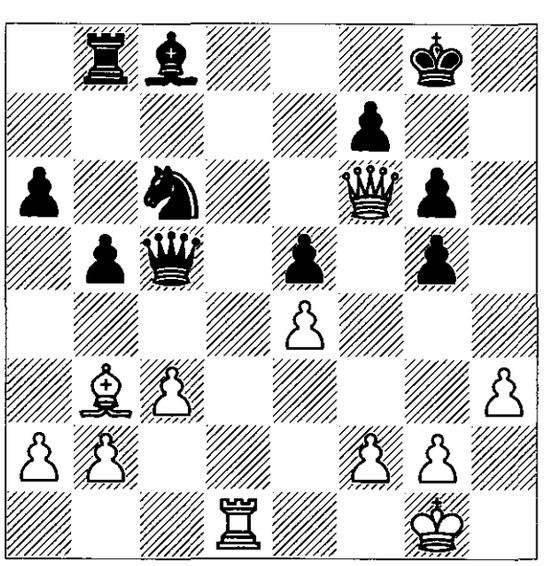
This is the right decision; instead trying to exploit the open file with 23 ♖xd8+? ♕xd8 24 ♖d1 is met by 24...♗d7!.

23...♖xd1

23...♕xc5 is met by 24 ♕xf6! (more forceful than 24 ♖xd8+ ♔g7! 25 ♖g8+! ♔xg8 26 ♕xf6 hxg5 27 ♗b3 ♗e6 28 ♗xe6, and soon Black will have three pawns for the piece) 24...hxg5 25 ♖xd8+, winning.

24 ♖xd1 ♕xc5 25 ♕xf6 hxg5 26 ♗b3! *(D)*

B



26...♖b7

Now that White is in command of the d-file, 26...♗e6 27 ♗xe6 fxe6 28 ♖d7 is no defence.

27 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 28 ♕h6+ 1-0

Black resigned because after 28...♔e7 (if 28...♔e8, then 29 ♖d5 wins, while 28...♔g8 is met by 29 ♖d6) 29 ♖d5! ♕b6 30 ♕xg5+, he is mated.

Game 11

Baadur Jobava – Vasily Ivanchuk

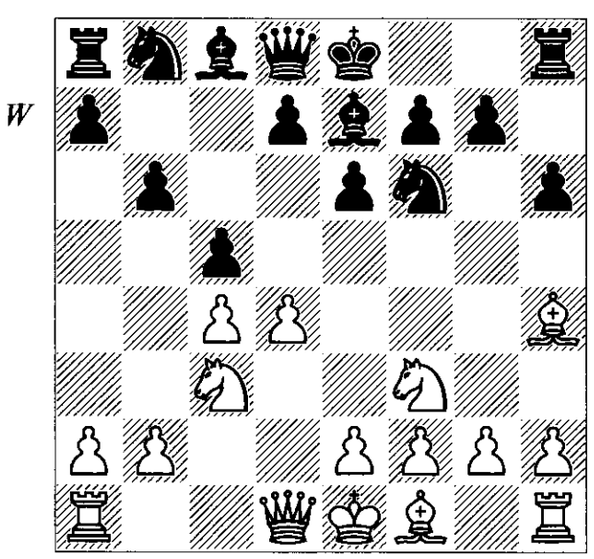
Capablanca Memorial, Havana 2005

Queen's Indian Defence, ♗g5

In this game, White chooses an ambitious opening, trying to lure Black into weakening his position by threatening to win material. In order to do this he had to play actively with his developed pieces.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 ♗e7 6 ♘c3 c5 *(D)*

This Queen's Indian transposes into the Tartakower Variation of the Queen's Gambit after 6...d5.



7 e4

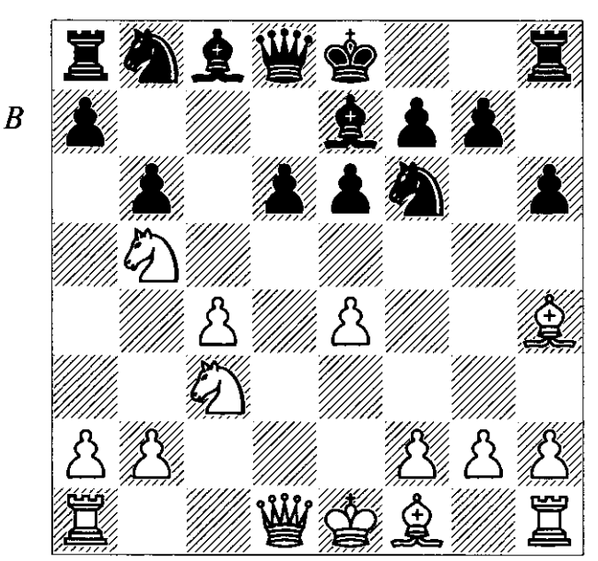
Playing 7 d5 would be good if White could keep his pawn on d5 because it would neutralize the b7-bishop but due to tactical motifs the advance is not satisfactory: Black can exploit the loose h4-bishop with 7...♘xd5!. If White then takes on e7, Black recaptures with the knight, whereas 8 ♘xd5 ♗xh4 9 ♘xh4 ♗b7! (not 9...exd5? 10 ♕xd5!) 10 ♘f5 (or 10 ♘f3 exd5 11 cxd5 0-0, with an excellent Benoni for Black because the d5-pawn is weak) 10...exf5 11 e3 0-0 12 ♗e2 ♘c6 13 0-0 ♖e8 gives him a very pleasant game with an extra pawn, although admittedly this pawn is not very important for the time being. Ivanchuk assesses the position as slightly better for Black.

7...cxd4

Reaching a hedgehog structure, with the bishop being unusually placed on h4 at an early stage. This gives the position a distinctly different character.

8 ♘xd4 d6 9 ♘db5 *(D)*

The alternatives were 9 ♗d3 and 9 ♕c2, leading to standard positions.



An ambitious move, trying to make the most of the h4-bishop's pressure on f6. How should Black reply?

The natural answer 9...0-0? loses material for inadequate compensation after 10 e5! dxe5 11 ♗xf6 ♕xd1+ (worse is 11...♗xf6 12 ♕f3) 12 ♖xd1 ♗xf6 13 ♘c7.

On the other hand 9...♗b7 allows 10 ♗xf6, and Black has to retake with the pawn, leaving his structure weak. Among other possibilities

White has the annoying queen manoeuvre ♕g4-g7.

9...a6!

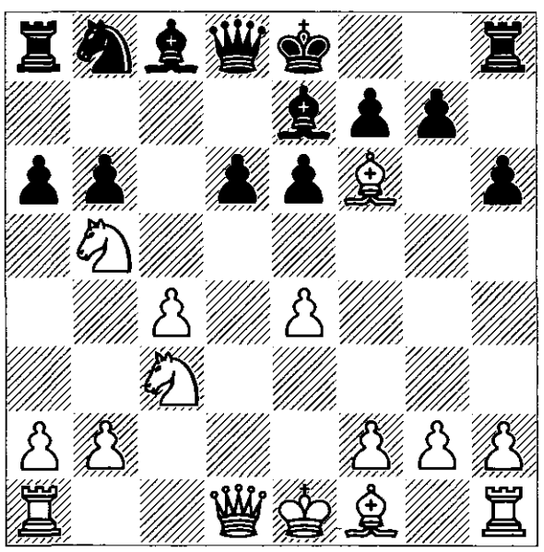
A typical move in the hedgehog structure, controlling the b5-square and preparing the eventual break ...b5, although admittedly it is usually played earlier to prevent any annoying ♘b5 by White. Here it has more depth than it appears at first sight.

10 ♗xf6 *(D)*

This was the idea – to weaken Black's pawn-chain.

White had the interesting alternative 10 e5, trying to exploit the situation of the a8-rook, which incidentally was used by Jobava in a subsequent game against Carlsen at Skanderborg 2005. We shall examine it as Supplementary Game 11.1.

B



Now the apparently forced reply 10...gxf6 leads to a complex position; e.g., 11 ♘d4 ♕c7 12 ♕g4 ♘c6 13 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 14 ♕g7 ♖f8 15 ♕xh6 ♗b7, as Ivanchuk points out.

10...♗xf6!

An amazing pawn sacrifice after which Black loses his bishop-pair and the right to castle.

Black intends to make the most of the tempi White has spent developing his queenside and moving his knight from g1 all the way to b5. All this has made White delay his kingside development, and he still has to bring his king to safety.

11 ♘xd6+ ♔e7!

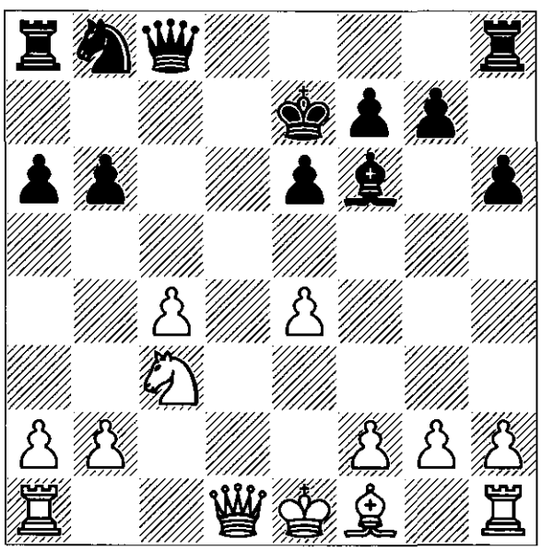
Forcing a decision by the d6-knight. Instead 11...♔f8? is inferior – White has time for 12 f4!, when both 12...♗e7 13 e5 ♗xd6 14 exd6, with a strong pawn on d6, and 12...♗xc3+ 13 bxc3 ♘d7 14 e5, now with a powerful knight on d6, give White a clear plus.

12 ♘xc8+

And the "time-devouring knight" – as Nimzowitsch called such a piece – is exchanged for a bishop which had yet to be developed.

12...♕xc8 *(D)*

W



13 ♘a4

Trying to maintain the momentum on the queenside and at the same time preventing 13...♗xc3+!, which would follow after, for instance, the developing move 13 ♗e2. After 14 bxc3 ♖d8 15 ♕b3 ♘d7, the weak white pawns and the agile black knight more than fully compensate for the pawn.

13 ♘a4 is also counting on an initiative generated by already-developed pieces, but White is still neglecting to bring his kingside into play. The positional threat could be prevented by playing 13 ♕c2. Against it the occupation of d4 by the knight is what the position 'demands', but the direct 13...♘c6 is not the best way to go about it. White regroups well with 14 f4!, and after 14...♘d4 15 ♕f2, he threatens 16 e5 – White's camp is in complete harmony. Better is 13...♕c5!, with ideas of 14...♘c6 and ...♘d4, which would follow after 14 ♗e2, whereas 14 ♗d3 ♘c6 15 a3 ♖hd8 16 0-0 ♘d4 17 ♕d1 ♔f8 gives Black a squeeze on the dark squares, to which he will soon add strong pressure on the d-file, more than adequately compensating for the pawn.

13...♖d8

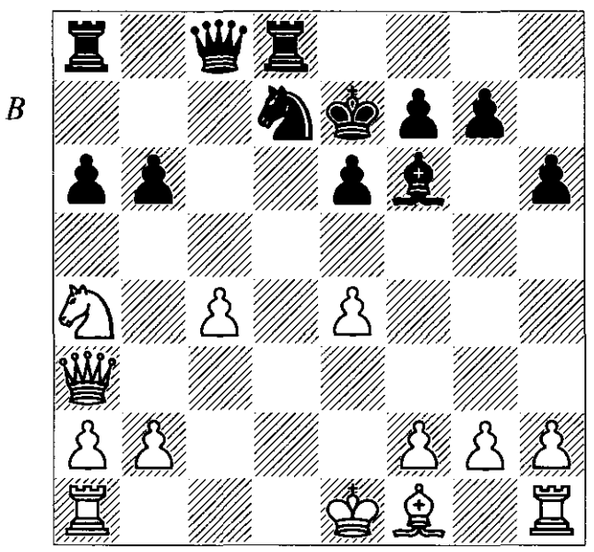
Very often the obvious move is the best one – the rook is brought into play with tempo.

14 ♕b3 ♘d7!

Another remarkable decision. 14...♕c6, hitting the e4-pawn, followed by ...♘d7 is playable. Black, however, wants more – he doesn't want to 'lose' a tempo with the queen. Instead he keeps the option of moving it to another square. In particular he is trying to activate himself quickly with the knight.

15 ♕a3+ *(D)*

The game would follow similar lines after 15 ♕b4+, whereas 15 ♗e2 is met by 15...♘c5.


B

15...♘c5!!

This elegant pawn sacrifice for the initiative was envisaged when playing 14...♘d7. The retreat 15...♔e8 is less appropriate, as it allows White to continue his development comfortably after 16 ♗e2.

16 ♗e2

After 16 ♘xb6 Black seizes the initiative by 16...♕c6, since 17 ♘xa8? does not work due to the nice reply 17...♗xb2! 18 ♕xb2 ♕xe4+ 19 ♕e2 ♘d3+, winning the queen. White would have to play 17 ♘a4, and after 17...♕xa4 18 ♕xc5+ ♔e8, Black is threatening 19...♗xb2, with a dangerous initiative. Then 19 e5?! does not work due to 19...♗e7 20 ♕e3 ♗b4+ 21 ♔e2 ♕c6.

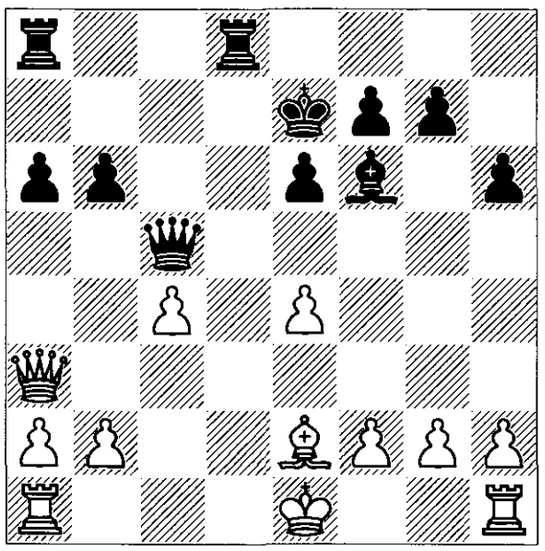
If the white queen were on b4, the sequence would be 17 ♘xa8? ♗xb2! 18 ♖d1 ♕xe4+ 19 ♗e2 ♖xd1+ 20 ♔xd1 ♕b1+ 21 ♔d2 ♗c1+! 22 ♔c3 ♗d2+, winning.

16...♕c6

Only now – White was threatening to castle and neutralize Black's lead in development. There is no other way to keep the tension.

17 ♘xc5 ♕xc5! *(D)*

Even a pawn down, the ending is advantageous! It is true that Black's position is also satisfactory after 17...bxc5 18 0-0 ♖ab8! (not 18...♖d2? 19 ♕e3! {threatening e5} 19...♕d6 20 ♖ad1, and White is doing well) 19 ♖ab1 ♖d2, with compensation for the pawn.


W

18 b4?

Even though the endgame is good for Black, it was necessary to go for it because the middlegame is worse – even more so after weakening moves like this.

After 18 ♕xc5+ bxc5 19 ♖d1! (better than 19 ♖b1 ♖ab8 20 b3 ♗c3+ 21 ♔f1 ♖d2, as Ivanchuk indicates: White's king is uncomfortable and there is neither good coordination nor communication among his forces) 19...♗xb2 20 0-0 ♗d4 Black is slightly better.

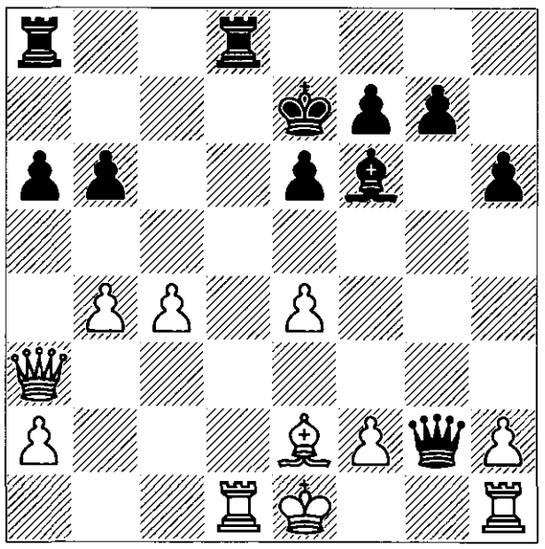
18...♕g5

Of course, with a double attack on the rook and on the g2-pawn.

19 ♖d1

Contesting the file, which won't be any relief in the end. White's problems aren't solved either by keeping the rook: after 19 ♖b1 ♕xg2 20 ♗f3 ♕g5 21 ♔f1 ♗d4 (Ivanchuk suggests also 21...♖d2 22 b5+ ♔e8, with an initiative that seems at least as strong) 22 ♖g1 ♕d2 23 ♗e2 ♕f4, threatening mate and the pawns on h2 and e4.

19...♕xg2 *(D)*



With the disappearance of this pawn, the white king is guaranteed a fraught existence in every corner of the board.

20 b5+ ♔e8 21 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8

Abandoning the a6-pawn to its fate, but the possible invasion by the rook is more important – activity is worth more in this case.

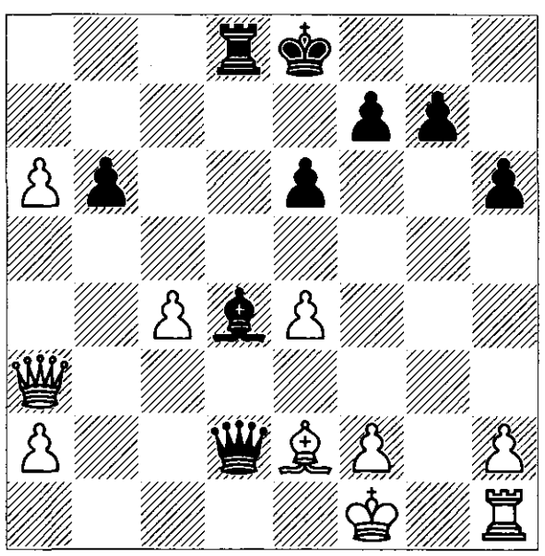
22 ♗f3 ♕g5 23 bxa6

23 ♔f1 axb5 24 ♖g1 ♕e5 25 cxb5 ♕xb5+ is no improvement for White – he is a pawn down and doesn't even have a passed pawn.

23...♕d2+ 24 ♔f1 ♗d4

This was the idea of the previous check – the absence of the h1-rook is felt, making Black's control of the dark squares all the more important.

25 ♗e2 *(D)*



25...♗c5!

Forcing the white queen to neglect one of its duties, and clearing the d-file too.

26 ♕g3

26 ♕b3 is answered with 26...♕f4 27 ♕f3 (27 ♗f3 loses to 27...♖d2) 27...♕xf3 28 ♗xf3 ♖d2 29 ♗e2 ♖xa2 30 ♖g1 g6, when the pawn-down endgame with the tremendous c5-bishop is torture for White – the presence of the rooks means that not even the opposite-coloured bishops bring any relief.

26...♕xa2

Defending this pawn was the duty forsaken by 26 ♕g3.

27 ♕xg7?

White was not in an enviable position – this was not a case of choosing between "being poor and healthy or rich and sick." But the text-move does make things easier for Black.

The defensive task was very complicated too after 27 ♖g1 g6 28 ♕f4 ♕xa6 29 ♔g2 ♕a2, or 27 a7 ♕xa7 28 ♕xg7 ♕a2 29 ♕g3 ♕b1+ 30 ♔g2 ♕xe4+, with a clear advantage to Black in both cases: he has an extra pawn and, as usual when a king is as exposed as White's is, the presence of opposite-coloured bishops favours the superior side, which in many occasions has an extra attacker.

27...♖d1+

Making decisive material gains – the a6-pawn is easily put under control.

28 ♔g2 ♖xh1 29 ♕h8+ ♔d7 30 a7 ♕xe2 0-1

Black fully justified his amazing counterattacking idea. He sacrificed a central pawn; moreover, he lost the right to castle but this was never felt – the black king was never in any danger, whereas White's king was in trouble early on.

The reason for Black's success lay in the many tempi White wasted playing with only a few pieces in the opening and at the beginning of the middlegame.

Exploiting this factor required a good deal of imagination and accurate calculation by Black– 10...♗xf6!, 14...♘d7!, 15...♘c5!!.

The importance of taking into account the opponent's ideas and trying to stop him from improving his position was also seen at several

stages, as in the accurate 11...♔e7! instead of 11...♔f8?, and in White's wrong decision to play 18 b4?, which clearly worsened his position after 18...♕g5.

Another detail to take into consideration is that one should not miss the chance to deflect an enemy piece, forcing it to move to a worse position, as with 25...♗c5!, which in this case led to the win of a pawn.

Lastly, this game is yet more proof of the general rule stating that opposite-coloured bishops are an advantage for the attacking side.

Supplementary Game 11.1

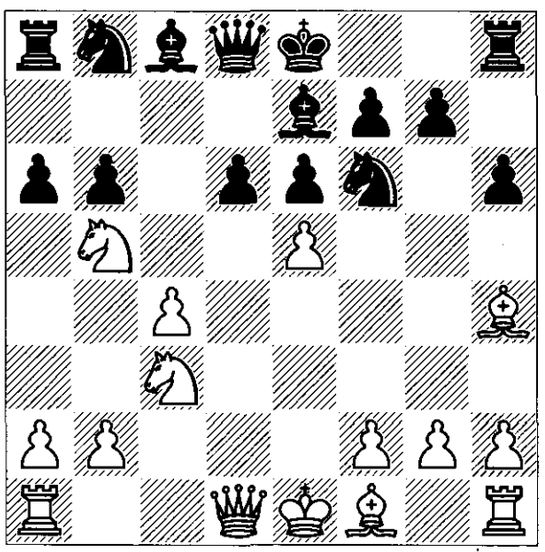
Baadur Jobava – Magnus Carlsen

Skanderborg 2005

Queen's Indian Defence, ♗g5

1 c4 ♘f6 2 d4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 ♗e7 6 ♘c3 c5 7 e4 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 d6 9 ♘db5 a6 10 e5 *(D)*

B



10...dxe5!

Somewhat inferior is 10...axb5 11 exf6, when after 11...gxf6 12 ♕f3, followed by ♘xb5, White achieves his goal of weakening Black's structure, whereas 11...♗xf6?! 12 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 13 ♕xd6 costs Black the b5-pawn because 13...bxc4? is a mistake due to 14 ♘b5 ♘a6 15 ♖d1!.

11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♕f3

The point – the rook on a8 is trapped and White wins material.

12...axb5 13 ♕xa8 b4 14 ♘e4

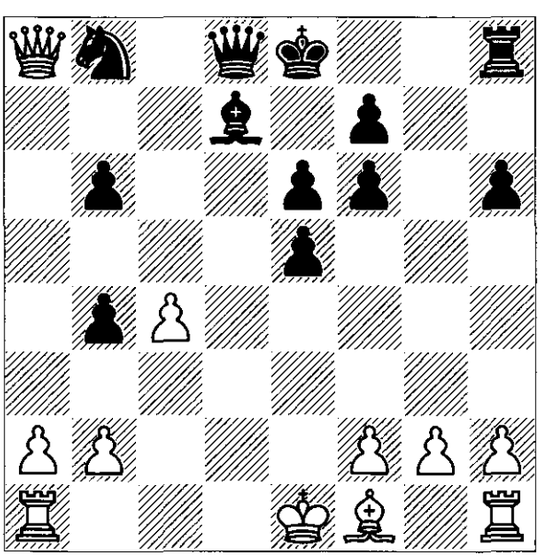
This move is likely still to be home preparation. However, perhaps it is the moment to choose 14 ♕xb8 bxc3 15 bxc3 e4 16 ♖c1 ♗d7, although Black has adequate compensation for the exchange.

14...♗d7 15 ♘xf6+

The pressure along the d-file with 15 ♖d1 shouldn't be very dangerous – there are no pieces supporting it. Against it several moves are possible, such as cautiously conceding the d-file by 15...♕c7. In *Chess Today* Notkin suggested 15...♗e7, with the idea of continuing with ...0-0 and ...f5. In the event of 16 ♘d6+?! ♗xd6 17 ♖xd6 ♕c7, White must return the exchange, given that 18 ♖d2?? loses the queen to 18...♗c6, but the advance 16 c5!?, in order to play 17 ♗b5, seems dangerous, so it seems better "to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" and get off the d-file by 15...♕c7.

15...gxf6 *(D)*

W



It is notable that most analysis engines give White a clear advantage after 11 ♗xf6, which probably made Jobava reach this position confidently when preparing for the game. However, it would seem White's superiority is not so great.

The engines still occasionally err when evaluating long-term elements, such as the weaknesses of the dark squares in White's position. In the game d4 had a special relevance, whereas the fact that Black's structure is so weak was of little importance. Korchnoi has very often complained about how "inconsistent" computers are, abruptly changing their evaluations. Admittedly this happens less and less frequently and drastically but this game is an example of it. The engines are already not so sympathetic to White's cause.

16 c5?!

White won't get much out of this advance, but already there are no traces of an advantage for him after 16 0-0-0 ♕c7 17 ♕f3 ♔e7, followed by ...♘c6, heading for the strong d4-square.

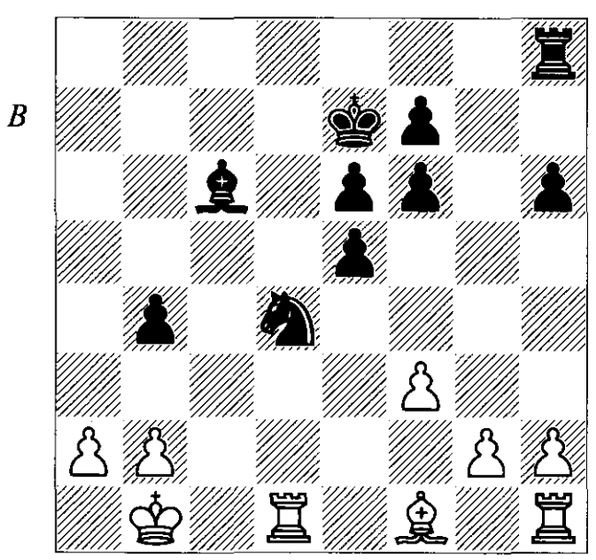
16...bxc5 17 ♕a7 ♘c6 18 ♕xc5 ♘d4

Black is doing very well.

19 0-0-0 ♕e7 20 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 21 ♔b1 ♗c6!

Preventing the development of the kingside.

22 f3 *(D)*



22...♖g8! 23 ♖c1

Heading for c4 to distract Black from his annoying pressure on the kingside. White cannot defend g2 with 23 ♖d2? due to 23...♘xf3!, when after 24 gxf3 ♗xf3 25 ♗g2 ♗xg2 the pin 26 ♖g1?? is not on due to 26...♗e4+.

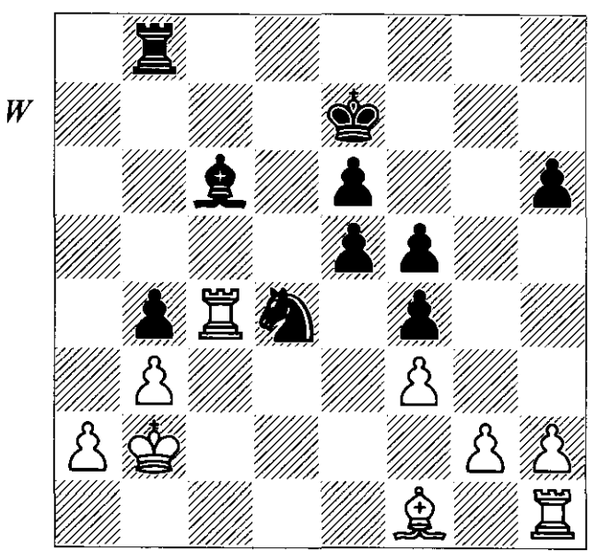
23...f5

Black starts to mobilize his centre.

24 ♖c4 ♖b8!

The simplest – Black keeps the tension. Now 25 ♗d3? is not possible due to 25...♗b5. Black chose not to go for 24...♗d5 25 ♖xb4 ♘xf3, which seems interesting, although after 26 a4 the passed pawn would give White chances.

25 b3 f4 26 ♔b2 f5 *(D)*



Already the pawns look frightening.

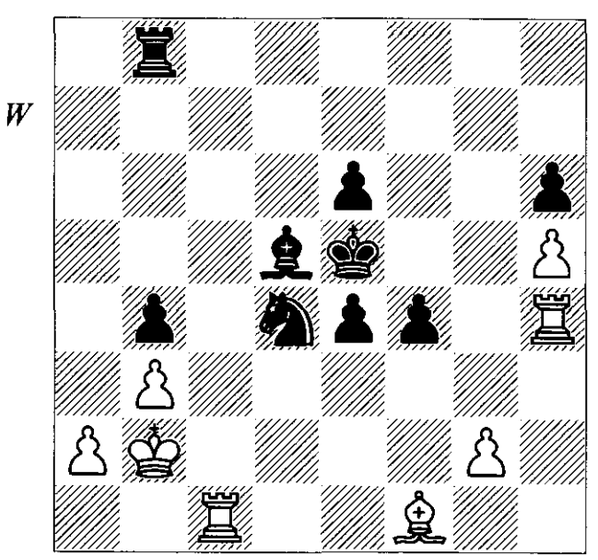
27 h4

After 27 ♗d3 Black keeps advancing his centre with 27...♗d5 28 ♖c7+ ♔d6 29 ♖g7 e4.

27...♔d6 28 h5 ♗d5!

Getting rid of the obstacle for the progress of the pawns.

29 ♖c1 e4 30 fxe4 fxe4 31 ♖h4 ♔e5 *(D)*



The strong pawn-centre – which in a few moves will result in one or two passed pawns supported by the four black pieces – together with the lack of coordination of the white pieces means the game is almost over.

32 ♖g4 e3 33 ♖g6 ♗e4! 34 ♖xh6 ♖g8 35 ♖c5+ ♔d6 36 ♖c4 ♔d5 37 ♔c1

Or 37 ♖xb4 e2 38 ♗xe2 ♖xg2.

37...e2 38 ♖xd4+ ♔xd4 39 ♗xe2 ♖xg2 40 ♗d1 ♖xa2 0-1

Mate is inevitable after, for instance, 41 ♖h8 (41 ♖xe6 ♔c3! is shorter) 41...f3 42 ♖f8 f2 43 h6 f1♕! 44 ♖xf1 ♔c3, and mate.

In the last game of the chapter we shall see a slightly different situation. After a somewhat bland opening, White gives up the initiative and Black resolutely seizes control. Therefore it is White who is forced to defend and try to counterattack.

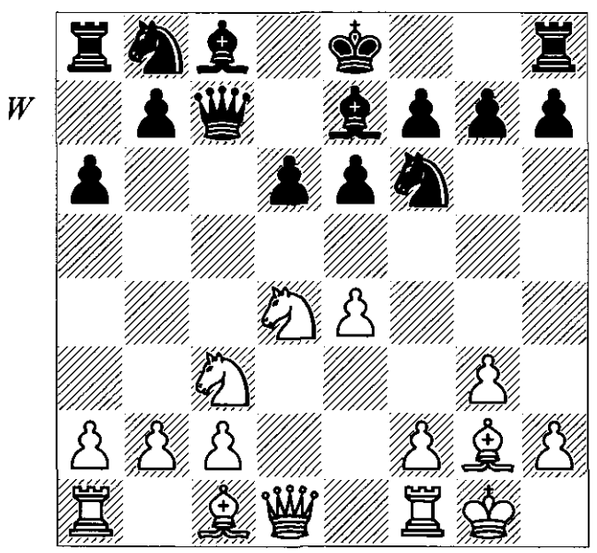
Game 12

Nigel Short – Vasily Ivanchuk

Horgen 1995

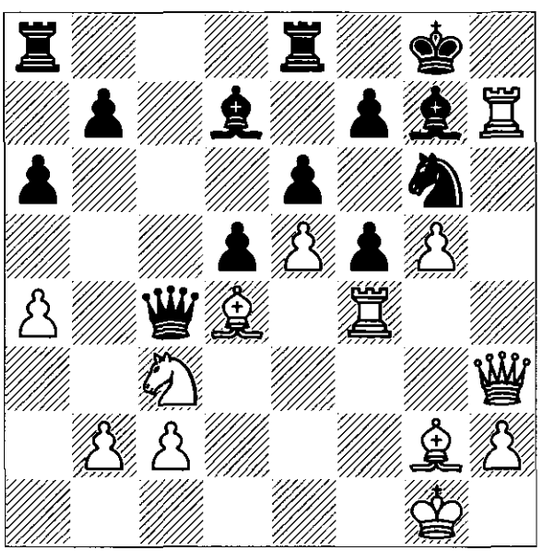
Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 g3 e6 7 ♗g2 ♕c7 8 0-0 ♗e7 *(D)*



9 a4

We are emerging from the opening – one would think that almost any 'normal' move should be playable. The text-move is perhaps precisely that: playable, but not best. It is not the most flexible move in the position. 9 ♗e3 is more usual, so that White can meet 9...♘c6 with the typical manoeuvre 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 11 ♘a4, followed by 12 c4. It is also playable, but riskier, to choose 9...0-0 because this prematurely provides White with a definite target – nothing less than the black king itself. There can follow 10 g4!, as Ivanchuk showed 13 years ago. Let's see an example of how dangerous it can be: Fressinet-Cvitan, European Ch, Kusadasi 2006 continued 10...♘c6 11 g5 ♘d7 12 f4 ♖e8 13 ♕h5 g6 14 ♕h3 ♗f8 15 a4 ♗g7 16 ♖ad1 ♘xd4 17 ♖xd4 ♘b6 18 e5 d5 19 ♗f2 ♗d7 20 f5 gxf5 21 ♖h4 ♘c8 22 ♖xh7 ♘e7 23 ♗d4 ♕c4 24 ♖f4 ♘g6 *(D)*.



25 ♖xg7+! ♔xg7 26 ♕h6+ ♔g8 27 ♘xd5! ♕xd5 (or 27...exd5, when the long diagonal is opened by 28 e6) 28 ♗xd5 ♘xf4 29 g6 ♘xg6 30 h4 ♖ad8 31 h5 ♘f8 32 ♗f2 (heading for h4, which is winning; quicker is 32 ♕g5+ ♔h7 33 ♕f6) 32...♗c6 (or 32...exd5 33 ♗h4 ♖e6 34 ♕g5+!, but not 34 ♗f6? ♖xf6 35 exf6? ♘e6) 33 ♗h4! ♖xd5 34 ♗f6 ♖d1+ 35 ♔f2 1-0.

Of course 9...0-0 doesn't lose – it's not even a serious mistake: Black's play can be improved later – but it is evident that Black has to play very carefully. It is never convenient to provide the opponent with a clear chance to attack, if there is no clear counterplay in sight.

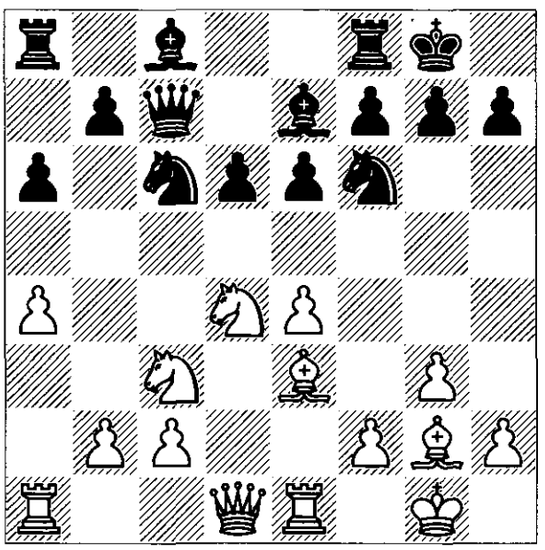
9...♘c6 10 ♖e1?!

This move is questionable because for the time being it is not clear whether the rook is more effective on e1 than on f1.

Better were both 10 ♗e3, when against 10...0-0 the line 11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 a5 is to be considered, and 10 b3, developing the bishop on the long diagonal.

10...0-0 11 ♗e3?! *(D)*

Another inaccuracy in White's play, and a more serious one. Ivanchuk suggested 11 b3.



The Sicilian Defence can lead to positions where the value of each move is very high – this is not one of them. However, it is also an opening where, in general, White plays on the kingside and Black on the queenside. It is a struggle between two initiatives.

It cannot be said that White has made any progress on the kingside with his last three moves but Black hasn't become activate yet either.

Exploiting the fact that Black has nothing urgent to defend against, how can he seize the initiative on the queenside?

11...♘e5!

After this strong centralization White no longer has the plan ♘xc6, and the threat of jumping to c4 at the appropriate time is annoying, showing the inconvenience of combining 10 ♖e1 and 11 ♗e3.

The jump ...♘g4 is also possible, so White has to control g4.

12 h3 ♖b8

The black rook steps off the long diagonal, preparing an opportune ...b5.

It is time for White to take stock: we know that the opening was not a success, so how does he readjust to the new situation?

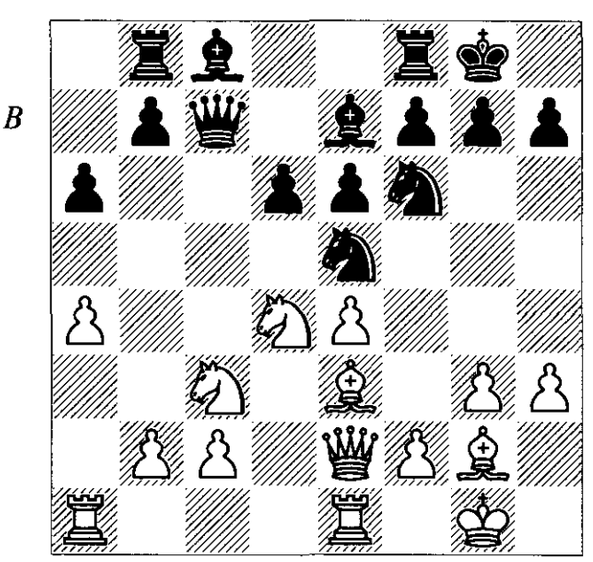
13 ♕e2?! *(D)*

A somewhat passive move. The idea is to play ♖ad1 so that when Black's ...♘c4 comes, the move ♗c1 can be made without shutting the a1-rook in. The text-move momentarily abandons the protection of the d4-knight so White has to be careful when he retreats the e3-bishop.

Giving up the initiative is not advisable. White cannot allow himself the luxury of making 'safe' moves – he must try to seek something active so that Black doesn't keep making progress.

He cannot embark on anything on the kingside without playing f4, as Ivanchuk indicated. The immediate 13 f4?! is met by 13...♘c4 14 ♗c1 e5!, when the d4-knight must move to the passive b3-square – where it will be out of play – to prevent the tactical blow 15...♘xb2, followed by 16...♕b6+ and 17...♕xb2. After 15 ♘b3 Black would keep making progress on the queenside with 15...b5.

Therefore it was more promising to play 13 ♔h2! first, stepping off the g1-a7 diagonal, and then f4 as soon as possible, so that Black has to worry about his kingside, and doesn't play comfortably in the centre and on the queenside.



13...♗d7

Completing development and preparing a timely ...b5. Since this move occupies the retreat-square of the f6-knight, Black always has to bear in mind that White can play g4 and have a satisfactory reply in place.

14 g4?!

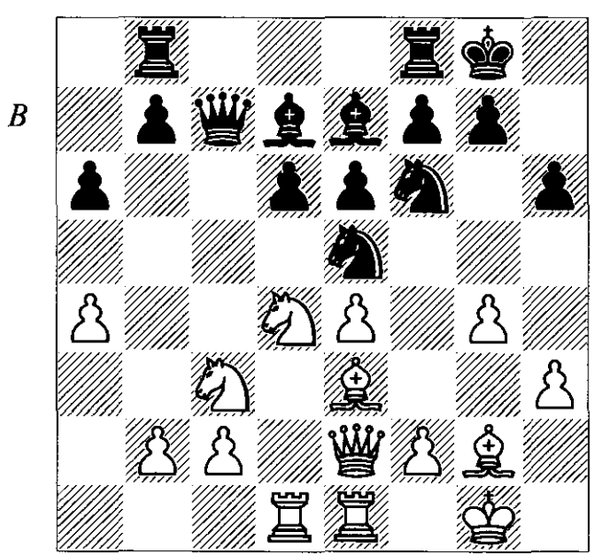
At this point this is not to be feared. Such a natural move in the Sicilian, speeding up the attack, can also be weakening if the attack is not successful, or if it doesn't even take place at all, as will be the case here.

Even though the kingside is White's natural space, not all the advances are equally advisable, or at least not in any order. Once again 14 ♔h2! was preferable.

14...h6!

The f6-knight can and must remain where it is, putting pressure on the centre, for the time being. Admittedly Black allows a contact point on g5, which can lead to the opening of lines against the black king, but in this case Black has enough resources to be able to counterattack successfully thanks to his comfortable deployment, and therefore is not afraid of this.

15 ♖ad1 *(D)*



15...♖fc8!

Yet another piece is brought into play, increasing the pressure against the queenside.

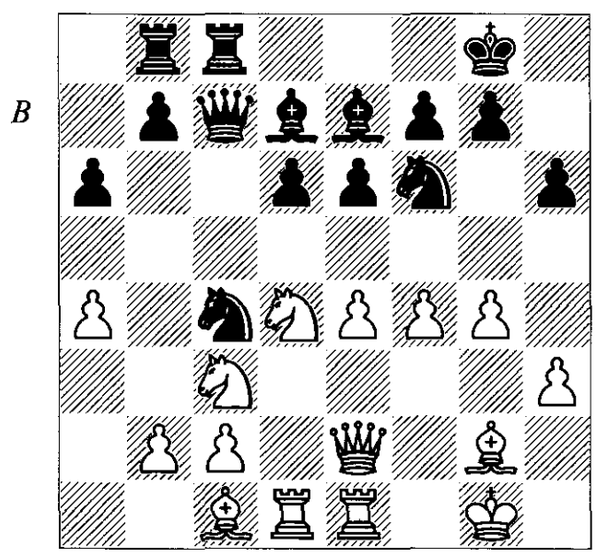
Sometimes the position is, or seems, so promising that it is logical to ask ourselves whether it is possible to exploit the activity without having to bring all the pieces into play; for instance, with 15...♘c4 16 ♗c1 ♘b6, when the white queenside is in danger. Can White solve his difficulties in this case?

Yes, he can – he has 17 ♗f4! at his disposal, hitting back along the h2-b8 diagonal, and 17...♘xa4?! 18 ♘xa4 ♗xa4 19 e5! gives White an edge, whereas after 17...e5 18 ♘f5 ♗xf5 (after 18...♖fe8 19 ♘xe7+ ♖xe7 20 g5! Black must start worrying about his king – 20...♘h7? is unacceptable on account of 21 a5!, when the weakness on d5 becomes serious) 19 exf5, he isn't worse.

16 f4?!

Black is now better prepared for the sharpening of the fight because his pieces are placed more actively than the white forces, so this belated advance can no longer be recommended. Ivanchuk already considers White's position inferior in any case.

16...♘c4 17 ♗c1 *(D)*



17...e5!

"Consistent and strong" (Ivanchuk). The d4-knight is driven away from the centre and Black keeps winning space.

Capitalizing on the vulnerable g1-a7 diagonal by 17...♕b6! is an attractive alternative. Black exploits the fact that White hasn't played the prophylactic ♔h2, and threatens the b2-pawn as well as the mortal 18...e5, which could follow after 18 b3?. White is virtually forced to go for hardly encouraging complications with 18 e5. Then:

a) After 18...dxe5 19 fxe5 ♘h7, White should avoid 20 b3? ♗b4 21 ♘a2 ♗xe1 22 ♕xe1 ♘a5, when he doesn't have enough compensation for the exchange (Ivanchuk). 20 ♖d3 seems better, when 20...♗c5, and 20...♗h4, followed by 21...♗g5, are annoying and strong. Note that the advance 18 e5 opens up the position in Black's favour after 18...dxe5, giving new life to the e7-bishop. Ivanchuk adds that 20 ♖d3 doesn't prevent 20...♘xb2 either, although

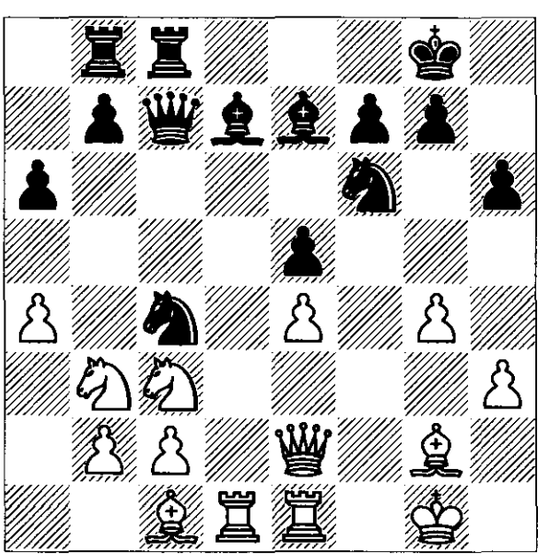
it is not clear whether the pawn is the most that Black can extract after 21 a5 ♕b4 22 ♗xb2 ♕xb2 23 ♖b1 ♕a3 24 ♘d5 ♕c5 25 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 26 ♖xb7.

b) The complications ensuing from the capture 18...♘xb2!? are also interesting. The best move is then 19 a5! (White loses if he opts for 19 ♗xb2? ♕xb2 20 exf6 ♗xf6). Then 19...♕b4? loses material to 20 ♘a2! so Black has to play 19...♘xd1! 20 axb6 ♘xc3 21 ♕d3 dxe5 22 fxe5 ♘fd5, with enough material in exchange for the queen – rook, knight and a pawn. The pieces are well placed and the b6-pawn is weak. Black "at the very least is not worse" (Ivanchuk). However, from a general practical viewpoint 18...♘xb2 is not to be recommended, since it's not in the interest of the side who is better placed to lead the game into chaos – that is the worse side's task.

18 fxe5

The more active 18 ♘f5? doesn't work because Black wins material with the simple combination 18...♗xf5 19 exf5 ♘xb2! 20 ♗xb2 ♕b6+, exploiting the situation of the white king on the g1-a7 diagonal.

18...dxe5 19 ♘b3 *(D)*

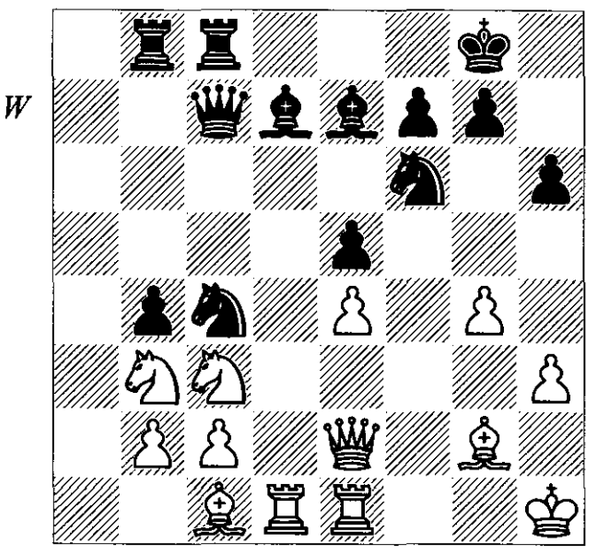


19...b5!

This thematic thrust on Black's strong flank gives him the advantage – his major pieces will become very powerful.

Sometimes it is difficult to choose among several attractive continuations. Another effective move was the direct 19...♗b4!, forcibly winning a pawn after 20 ♖d3 ♗xc3 21 ♖xc3 ♗xa4, but Black already wanted to get more out of the position.

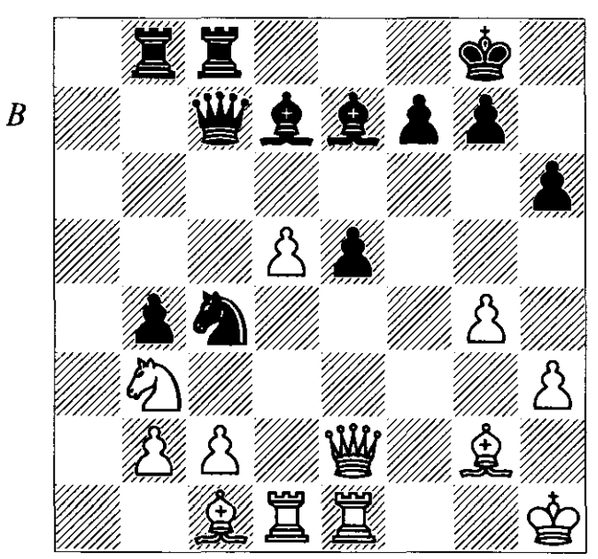
20 axb5 axb5 21 ♔h1 b4 *(D)*



Undoubtedly this is not the only good move but it is the most flexible.

22 ♘d5 ♘xd5 23 exd5 *(D)*

No better is 23 ♖xd5 ♗e6 24 ♖dd1, and here among others 24...♘b6 or 24...♘d6, with very strong pressure on the queenside – against c2 in particular. 24...♖a8, in order to play ...♖a2, is also effective.



23...♗h4!

Forcing the rook to move to a bad square since 24 ♖f1? doesn't work due to 24...♗b5.

24 ♖g1 ♗b5?!

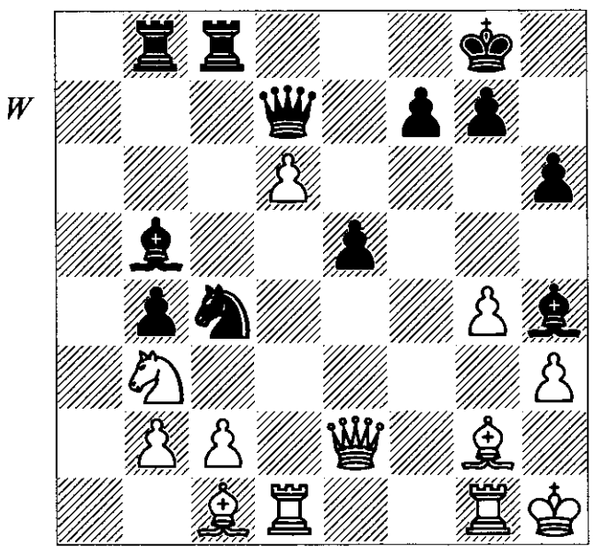
This doesn't give up all the advantage, but unnecessarily gives White chances by abandoning one of the blockading squares of White's passed pawn.

Ivanchuk recommended 24...♗g5, and after 25 d6 ♕b6 Black's advantage is unquestionable – the d6-pawn becomes a new weakness.

It is equally strong to prevent the advance of the pawn with 24...♖b6!.

25 d6 ♕d7 *(D)*

25...♕d8 or 25...♕a7 is somewhat better, because the queen is a bad blockader.



26 ♕e4?

Missing the chance to complicate the game with 26 ♖d5!, the idea being to play ♘c5, after which White creates some difficulties for Black. 26...♖d8 probably still favours Black, although much less than before.

26...♖b6

With the fall of White's only pride and joy, the position has a clearer master now.

27 ♖d5 ♖xd6 28 ♘c5 ♕a7 29 g5 hxg5 30 ♖gd1 ♖xd5

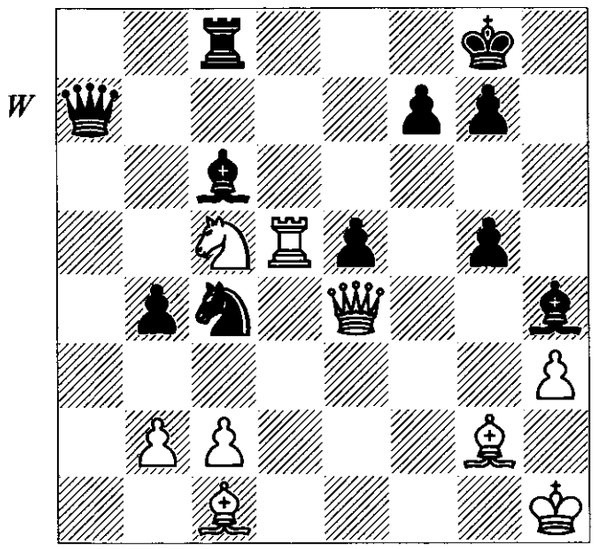
The simplest. After the subsequent pin, the white king will also become a target.

The alternative was the elegant 30...♕xc5, and after 31 ♖xc5 ♖xd1+ 32 ♔h2 ♖xc5 33 ♕a8+ ♔h7 34 ♗e4+ g6 35 ♕a7 ♘d6! the game is decided.

Ivanchuk rejected this line for tactical reasons: 34 ♕a7 creates more problems, keeping the bishop check in reserve, although objectively it was also losing. However, there is no need to complicate the game when a simpler path leads to victory.

31 ♖xd5 ♗c6 *(D)*

32 ♕f5



After 32 ♕g4 the most forceful is 32...♘d6! 33 ♖xd6 ♗xg2+ 34 ♕xg2 ♕xc5, with a winning advantage.

The rest is simple.

32...♕a8 33 ♔h2 ♗xd5 34 ♗xd5 ♘d6 35 ♕d3 ♕a7 36 ♗e3 ♖xc5 0-1

After an inaccurate opening, White's most crucial error was perhaps not to notice that it was necessary to play f4, on move 13 or 14, not so much as to attack but in fact to counterattack on the kingside, as the initiative had already passed to Black.

There are interesting lessons to be learnt from this game, such as that natural-looking moves are not necessarily the best – 10 ♖e1?!, 11 ♗e3?!.

Tarrasch's dictum – "the seeds of defeat lie in a cramped position" – can be applied to almost any open or double-edged position, where it is vital to make progress with one's own plans and slow down those of the opponent. This applies to the moves mentioned, as well as to 13 ♕e2?!.

It is never amiss to remember valid lessons for any position, such as the fact that it is important to take into account the opponent's ideas, and not to rush to exploit the advantage – 15...♖fc8! – and that it is also important to seize the moment to make the most of any advantage, as with 17...e5!.

Also one should never miss the chance to force an enemy piece to a worse position – 23...♗h4!.

Exercises for Chapters 1 to 3

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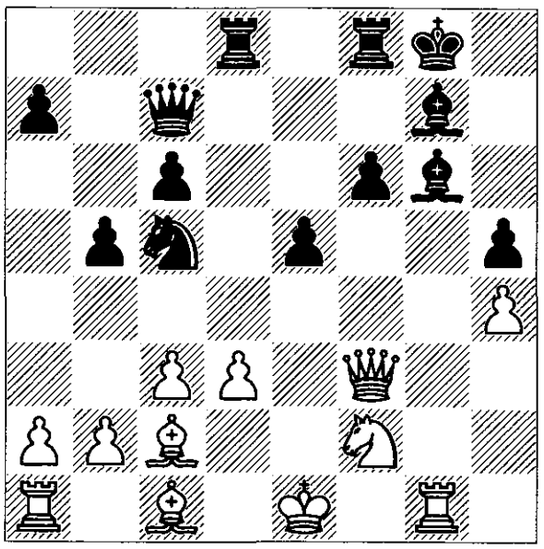

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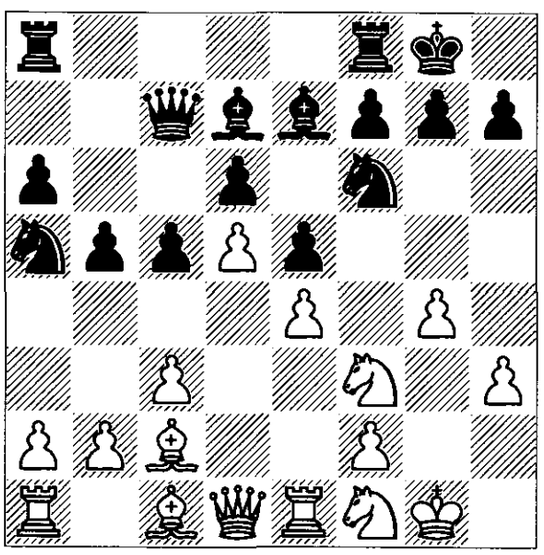

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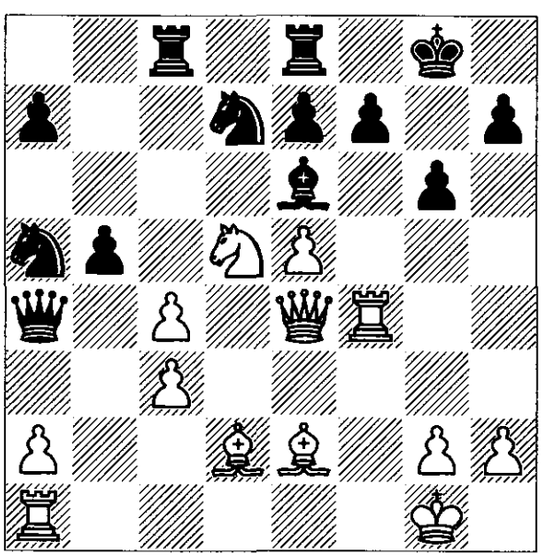

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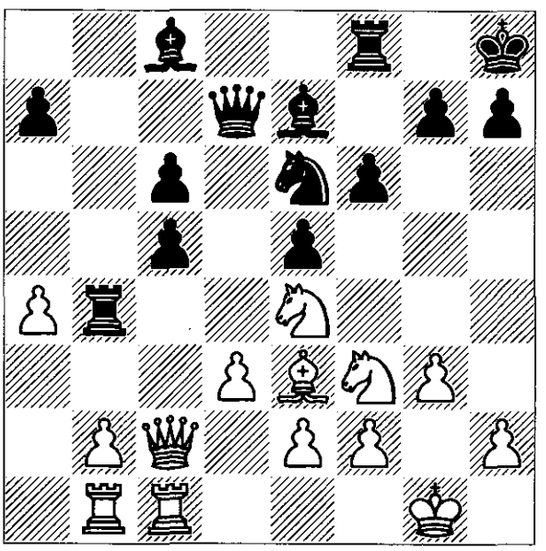

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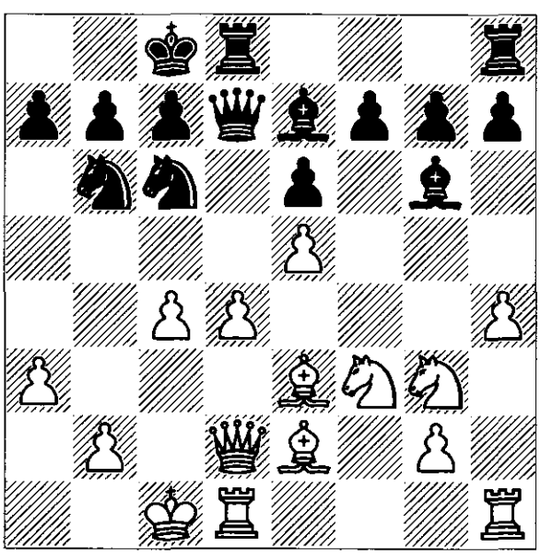

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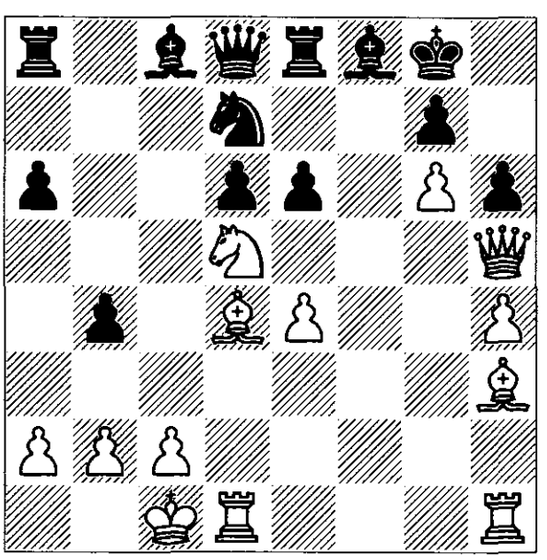

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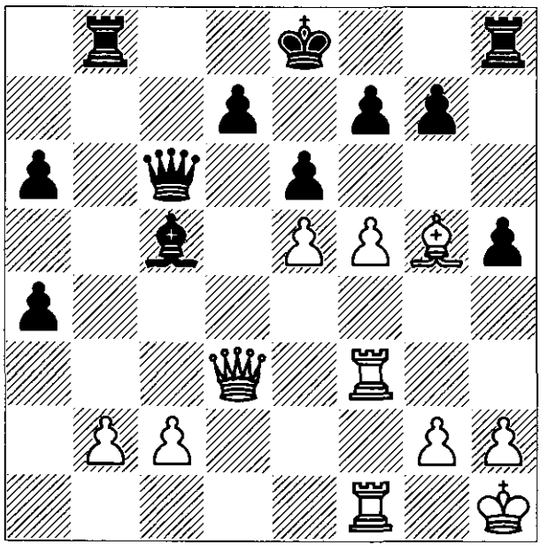

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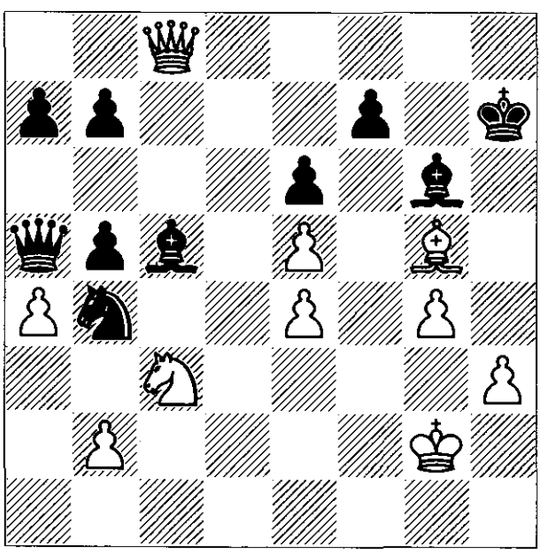

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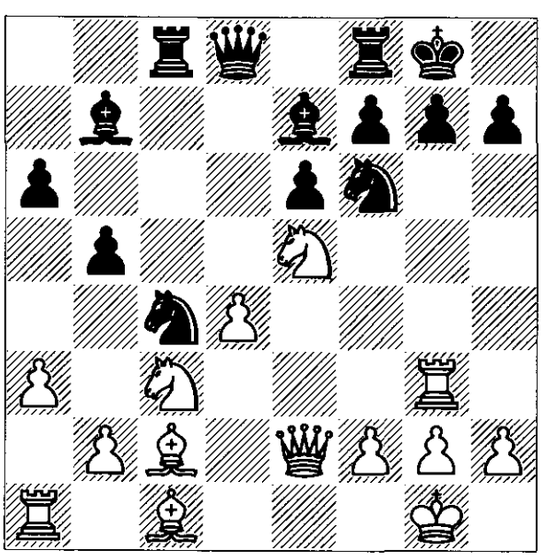

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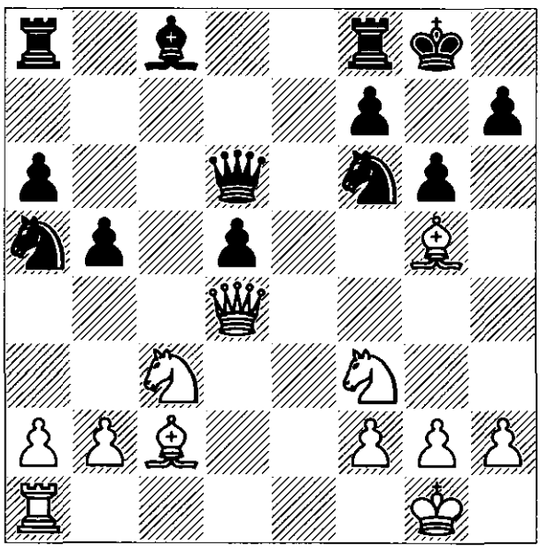

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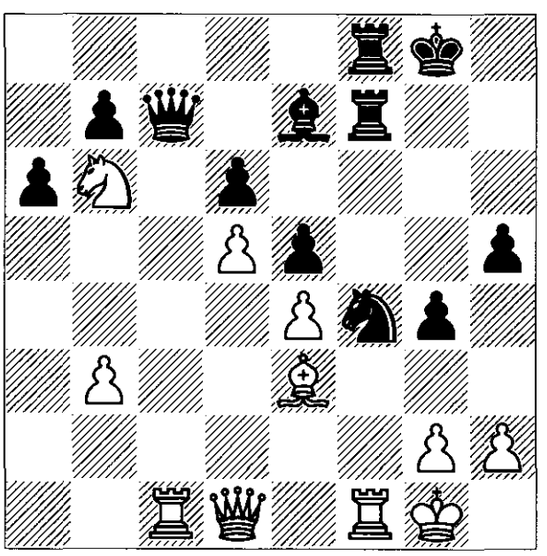

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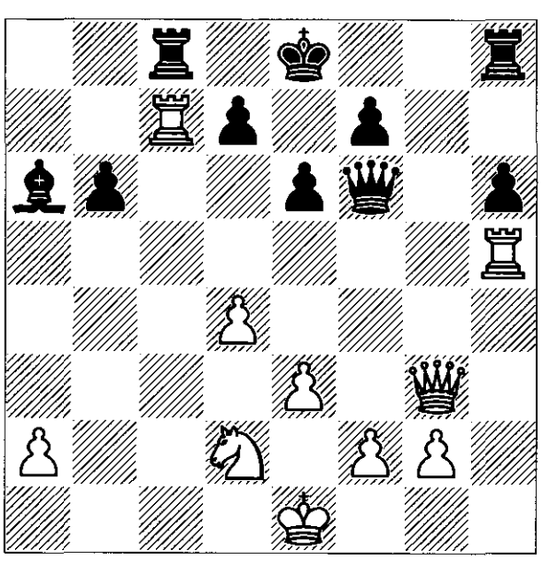

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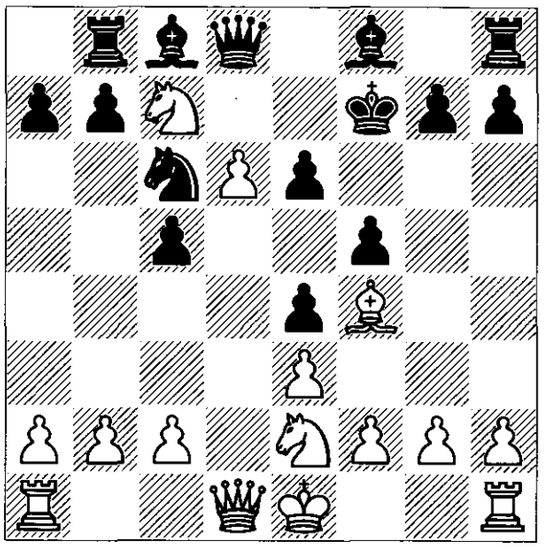

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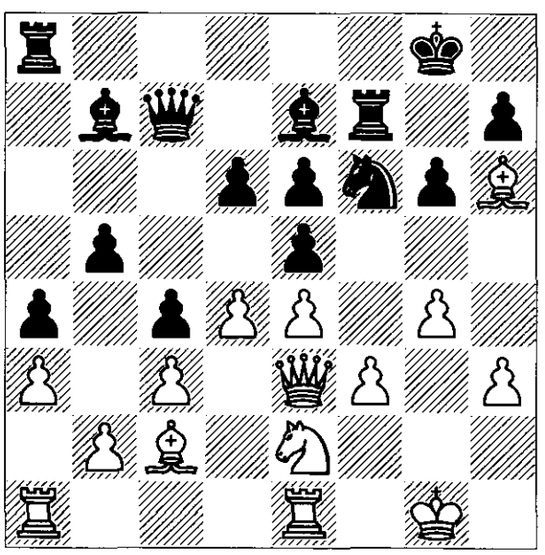

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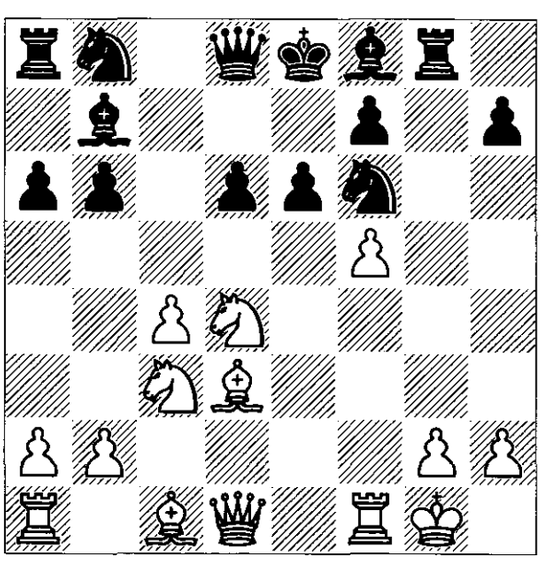

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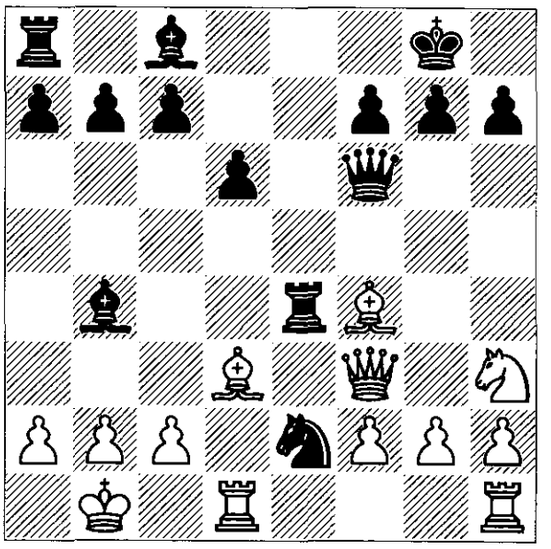

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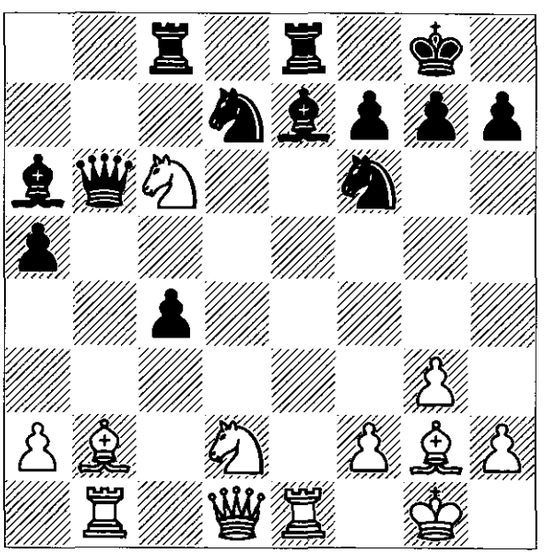

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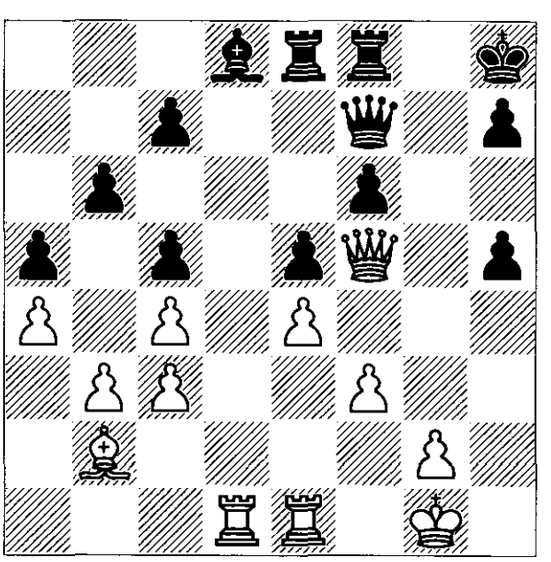

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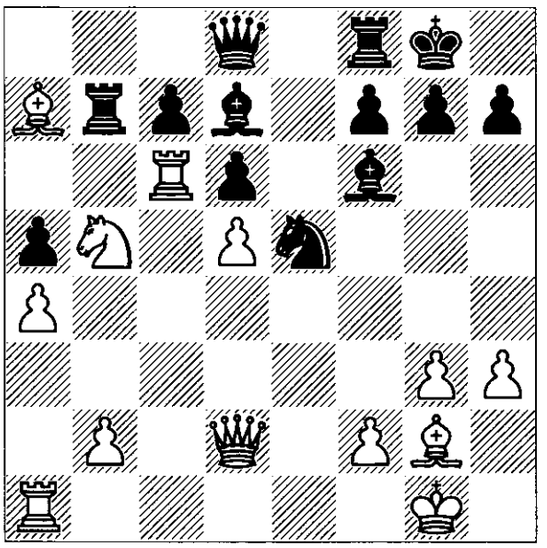

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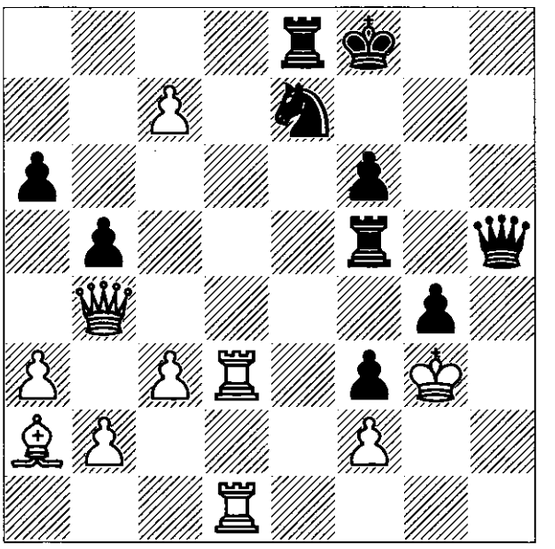


4 Regrouping

Manoeuvres aimed at improving the position of the pieces in general – or of a specific one – are a key element of the defence.

In this chapter we highlight defensive manoeuvres of this type, as well as ones used for attacking purposes, although we shouldn't forget that this is only one part of the chess struggle – we must take into consideration the other elements of the position.

Sometimes protracted manoeuvring is necessary for one piece to carry out an essential defensive function. Regrouping ideas can sometimes be hard to spot, as it is counter-intuitive to spend time moving a piece forwards and backwards, especially in the context of vigorous attacks and counter-attacks.

If there is one master for whom this didn't represent a problem, a master who embodies the art of manoeuvring and of steadily, sometimes even surprisingly, improving the position of the pieces, it is the 9th World Champion, Tigran Petrosian. Let's see an illustrative example.

Supplementary Game 13.1

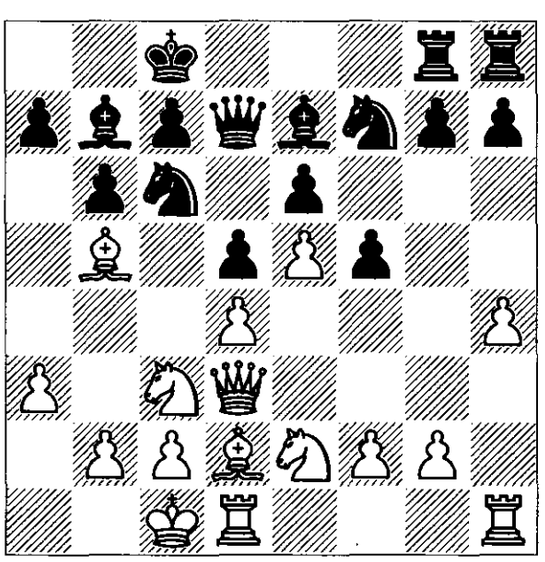
Fridrik Olafsson – Tigran Petrosian

Bled 1961

French Defence, Winawer Variation

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 ♕d7 5 ♕g4 f5 6 ♕g3 b6 7 h4 ♗b7 8 ♗d3 ♘c6 9 ♘ge2 0-0-0 10 ♗d2 ♘h6 11 a3 ♗e7 12 ♗b5 ♖dg8 13 ♕d3 ♘f7 14 0-0-0 *(D)*

B



One look at the position shows that White has more space thanks to his pawn-wedge on e5, although there isn't any immediate crushing plan in sight. This gives Black a certain freedom of action. He has placed his pieces apparently with the idea of expanding on the kingside.

Nevertheless after 14...g5 15 hxg5 ♘xg5 16 f3!, preventing ...♘e4, followed by 17 ♘f4, it doesn't look as though opening the g- and h-files has been a good deal for Black. His weakness on h7 is more important than the one on g2, which can be economically defended with ♘f4, incidentally hitting the other weakness on e6.

14...g6 and 15...h6, preparing ...g5 in a more leisurely way, in order to take with a pawn on g5, is not to be recommended either. There would follow 15 ♘f4 and when ...g5 comes the knight jump to h5 would be very strong.

What other ideas does Black have at his disposal?

Note that the position resembles a mirrored Benoni Defence, and thinking of the position in these terms can help clarify some possible plans.

14...♔b8!

The first step, although this prophylactic move is not impressive at first sight.

15 ♘f4 ♕c8!

The second step – now the annoying pin by the b5-bishop has disappeared.

16 ♘ce2

How should Black continue? By driving away the b5-bishop with 16...a6?

16...♘cd8!

No. The idea is now to play ...c5 (the mirror of the ...f5 idea in Benoni or Indian positions). Since Black doesn't want to deprive himself of a timely ...♗a6, he delays ...a6.

17 ♕b3? *(D)*

An error of calculation. Better was the 'forced' 17 c3, when after 17...c5 18 ♔b1 the struggle lies ahead.

The text-move loses a pawn almost by force. How did Black punish this mistake?

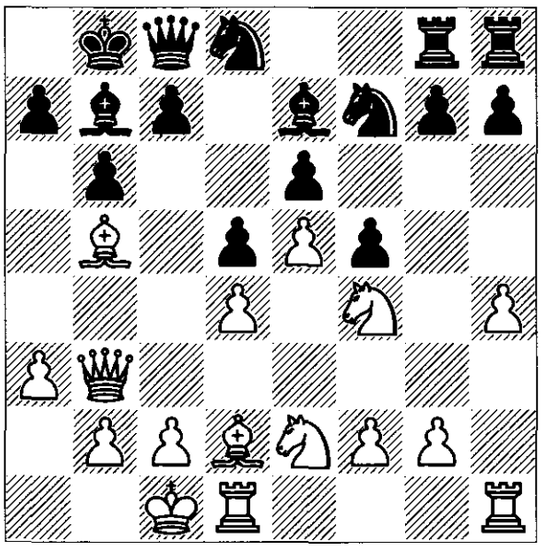
In the event of 17...c5 White could recover with 18 ♕e3 or 18 ♕g3. If driven away, the bishop can then retreat via a4-b3-a2, and after playing c3, come back into play via b1 or c2.

17...c6!

This *zwischenzug* has the point that 18 ♗a4? loses to 18...b5.

18 ♗d3 c5

B



Now the threat of winning a piece with 19...c4 forces White to take on c5, so the e5-pawn ends up defenceless.

19 dxc5 ♗xc5 20 ♘h3 ♘xe5 21 ♗f4 ♘df7 22 ♗b5 ♔a8 23 ♘d4 ♘g6 24 ♕a4?

This attempt at an attack quickens defeat. Black can win material and defend well. The rest of the game went:

24...♗xd4 25 ♗d7 ♕f8 26 ♖xd4 e5 27 ♖b4 exf4 28 ♖xb6 ♘fe5 29 ♖xb7 ♔xb7 30 h5 ♕d6 31 hxg6 ♕xd7 32 ♕xf4 ♘xg6 0-1

Let's now take a look at a less convoluted example.

Supplementary Game 13.2

Tigran Petrosian – Walter Browne

Tilburg 1982

Nimzo-Indian Defence, Rubinstein System

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 ♘c3 ♗b4 5 e3 0-0 6 ♗d3 ♗b7 7 0-0 d5 8 a3 ♗d6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 b4 a6 11 ♕b3 ♕e7 12 ♖b1 ♘bd7 13 a4 ♘e4 14 ♗b2 ♘df6 15 b5 a5 16 ♖bd1 ♘xc3 17 ♗xc3 ♘e4 18 ♗b2 ♖ad8 19 ♘e5 ♔h8 20 ♕c2 f6 21 ♘f3 ♗c8 22 ♘e1 f5 23 g3 ♖f6 24 ♘f3 ♖df8 25 ♘e5 ♖h6 26 f3 ♘g5 27 ♕g2 ♘h3+ 28 ♔h1 g5 29 g4 ♕f6 30 ♖d2 ♖h4 31 ♖c2 ♕g7 *(D)*

Black has launched an attack – one way or another, all his pieces are bearing down on the kingside. Although there are no immediate dangers, the same cannot be said of White.

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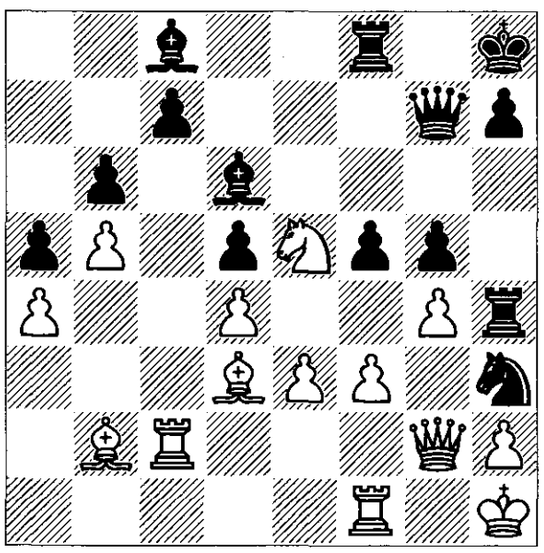


1) How should White improve the defence?

2) What weak point is there in Black's position that White can put pressure on?

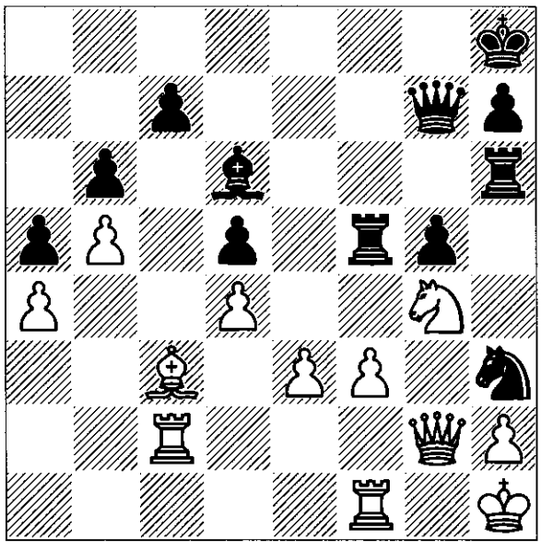
3) Which piece is it possible to improve, whether to exploit that weakness or for another function?

In a few moves we shall have the answer to these three questions.

32 gxf5!

In the first place let's note that by exchanging the 'good' bishop for Black's 'bad' one, White weakens the light squares in the black camp.

B



These squares, such as c6, are weaker because they become more accessible to White, whereas there are no clear squares in White's territory that are particularly worrying.

32...♗xf5 33 ♗xf5 ♖xf5

And now?

34 ♗c3!

Answering the last two questions. White is planning ♗e1-g3, after which the weakness on c7 becomes important. Petrosian considered that after this move White has a winning position.

34...♖h6

After 34...♗xe5 35 dxe5, followed by 36 ♗d4 and ♖fc1, the weakness on c7 makes Black's position indefensible.

35 ♘g4 *(D)*

Not even giving any chance for Black to take on e5, after which White would have to take with the pawn.

35...♖h5 36 ♗e1 ♕e7 37 ♗g3 ♖f7 38 ♖fc1

The harmony of the white forces is complete. The black pieces, on the other hand, neither attack dangerously, nor do they defend effectively.

38...♔g7 39 ♖c6 ♔f8 40 ♗xd6 cxd6 41 ♕g3 ♖h4 42 ♕xd6 1-0

White's counterattack is already decisive. If 42...♕xd6 43 ♖xd6 ♖xf3, the invasion by the three white pieces wins; e.g., 44 ♘e5 ♖f2 45 ♖c8+ ♔e7 46 ♖d7+ ♔e6 (or 46...♔f6 47 ♖f7+ ♔e6 48 ♖c6#) 47 ♖e8+ ♔f5 48 ♖f7+ ♔e4 49 ♘g4+.

The following game is an extreme example of manoeuvring play on the first three ranks. Petrosian did not set out to play in this way, however; he ended up in a difficult position following an inaccuracy in the opening, and saw what was necessary to give himself the best chance of emerging with his game intact. The outcome is successful, although playing in this way is not very advisable to someone without a special gift for handling cramped positions.

Game 13

Pal Benko – Tigran Petrosian

Candidates tournament, Curaçao 1962

Réti Opening

1 g3 d5 2 ♘f3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗f5 4 0-0 e6 5 d3 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 *(D)*

6...♘bd7?!

Black doesn't develop his f8-bishop yet. He makes this move first, which might seem a good idea, for it is a 'necessary' move – it can hardly be seen where else the b8-knight could be developed, whereas the king's bishop has a wider choice. This reasoning generally helps and is valid in most positions.

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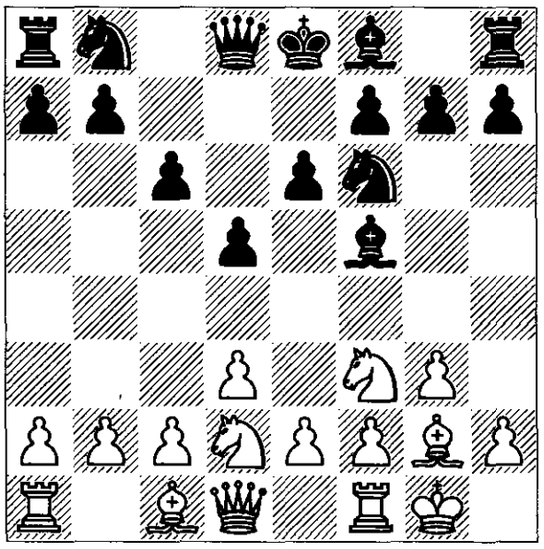

However, positional elements can rarely be isolated and analysed without considering other ones, such as the development of the kingside minor pieces, or anticipating what the opponent is going to do.

6...♗e7 was better.

7 ♕e1!

White can play in several different ways. He can choose how to attack the black centre, by either c4 or e4, and he can also develop his c1-bishop first by 7 b3.

This typical move, preparing a quick e4, is here the best way to punish Black's inaccuracy.

7...h6 *(D)*

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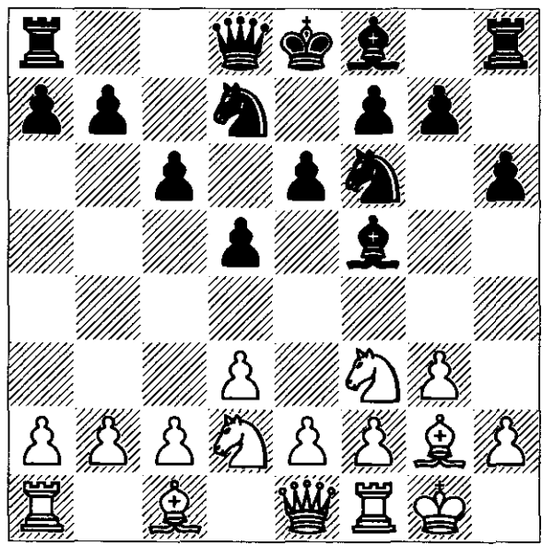


Another move which forms part of Black's scheme, providing a safe refuge for the f5-bishop.

8 e4 ♗h7 9 ♕e2

A useful move, waiting to see what Black does with his f8-bishop.

9...♗e7

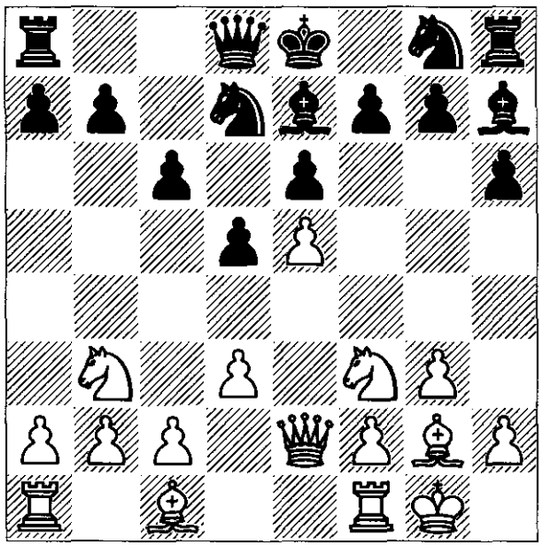
9...♗c5 is worth considering, although after 10 e5 ♘g8 White can win a tempo by attacking the bishop with a timely ♘b3, perhaps preceded by 11 a4 or, given his big lead in development, even with the pawn sacrifice b4.

10 e5!

Just at the right time. Had Black not played 6...♘bd7, the knight would now have a good retreat-square on d7.

10...♘g8 11 ♘b3 *(D)*

B



Black has a 'traffic jam' on the kingside. How should Black develop the g8-knight so that he can castle? Needless to say, playing ...h5 and ...♘h6 would come at a cost – the kingside would be weakened too much.

11...♗f8

Amazing, don't you think? After ...♘g8 Black now plays ...♗f8. If ever there was a player who was not afraid of these decisions, it was Petrosian. Note that the position is closed so it is not easy for White to exploit his lead in development.

12 c4 ♘e7 13 ♘fd4?!

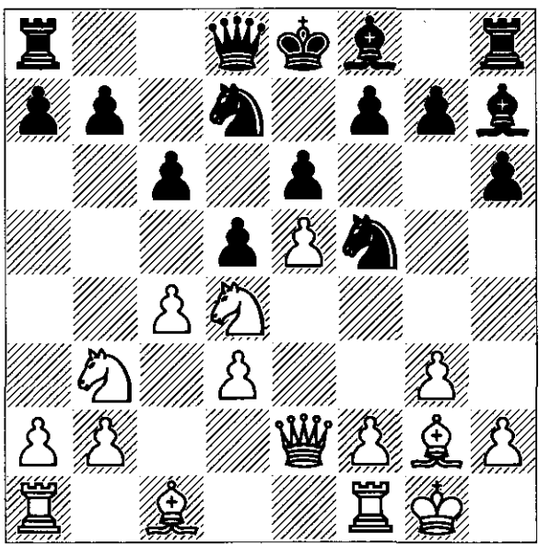
Alleviating the problem of the congestion of the black pieces. 13 ♗d2 seems better, as Timman indicates in his book on the tournament.

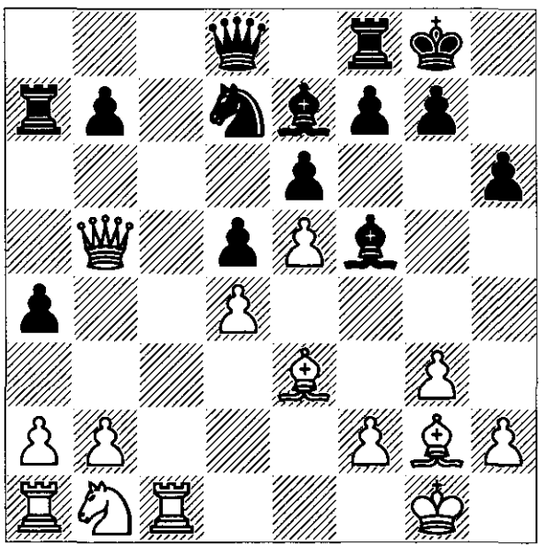
13...♘f5! *(D)*

With the exchange of knights, Black solves a great deal of his development problems.

14 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 d4

One of the virtues of 13 ♘fd4 was to pave the way for the f2-pawn, but it is not clear



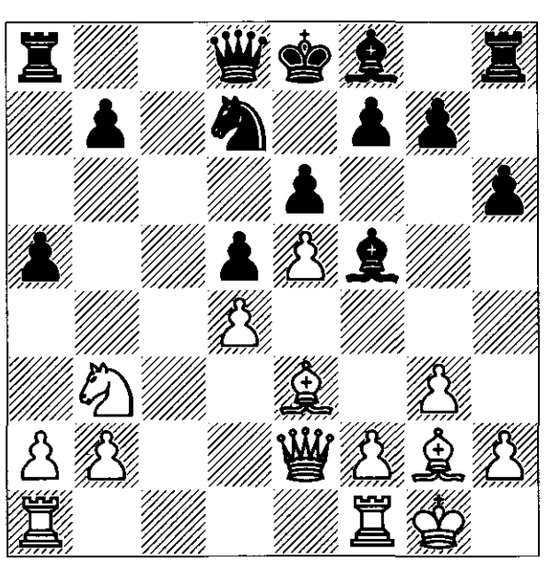


whether it is promising for White to play 16 ♘d4 ♗h7 17 f4, for after 17...♗c5 18 ♗e3 ♕b6 he is forced to give up a pawn.

16...a5!

Petrosian's manoeuvring play was deeply intertwined with his sense of danger, as well as his prophylactic thinking – a topic we shall cover in the next chapter. Here he preferred to delay the natural 16...♗e7 as that could be answered by 17 ♗d2, with the idea of playing a timely ♘a5. Then 17...a5 would be met by the annoying 18 ♕b5.

17 ♗e3 *(D)*



17...♗e7

Now it is time to take care of development. It is better to keep the move ...a4 in reserve.

18 ♖fc1 0-0 19 ♕b5

Stopping the a5-pawn with 19 a4 would allow the annoying 19...♕b6.

19...a4 20 ♘d2 ♖a7 21 ♘b1 *(D)*

White intends to play ♘c3, hitting the a4-pawn – how can Black improve his pieces now?

21...♘b8!

The knight was no longer performing any duties on d7 so now it heads to c6, from where it attacks the d4-pawn and also neutralizes White's control of the c-file.

22 a3

The direct 22 ♘c3 is answered with 22...a3 23 b3 ♘c6. With each simplification, the weakness of the a2-pawn becomes more accessible, both to ...♘b4 and to a black rook on its seventh rank.

22...♘c6 23 ♘c3 ♕a5

Black has no objection to an exchange of queens because the weakness of the d4-pawn guarantees him an acceptable game.

24 ♗f1 f6!

Another step to weaken the white centre.

25 f4 fxe5 26 fxe5 ♗g5!

This is the key to increasing the pressure on White's centre: by exchanging his 'good bishop' for White's 'bad bishop', he highlights the weakness of d4 – the e3-bishop was carrying out a good defensive task.

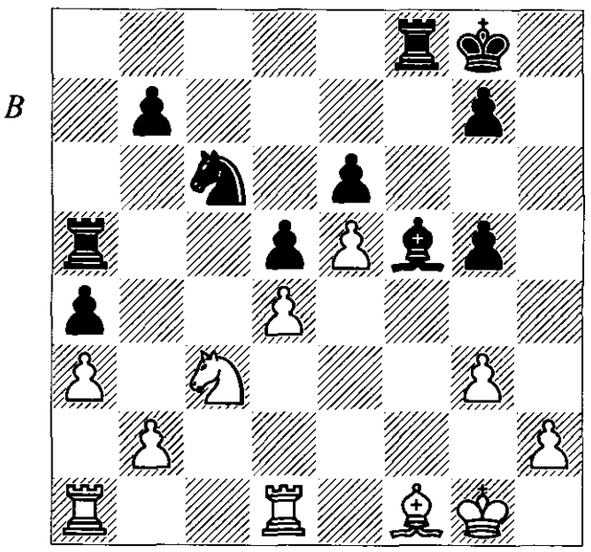
27 ♗xg5 hxg5 28 ♕xa5

In the event of 28 ♖d1 Black can seek another regrouping, momentarily retreating with 28...♕c7!?, in order to play ...♖a5, driving the white queen away, and then coming back with ...♕b6. The black queen would then be well placed to put pressure on the weaknesses of b2 and d4. Then 29 ♘xa4? is impossible because of 29...♗c2.

28...♖xa5

If 28...♘xa5, the c-file would be cleared and White could play 29 ♘b5 ♖aa8 30 ♖c7, so the c6-knight must stay put.

29 ♖d1 *(D)*



How can Black improve his position?

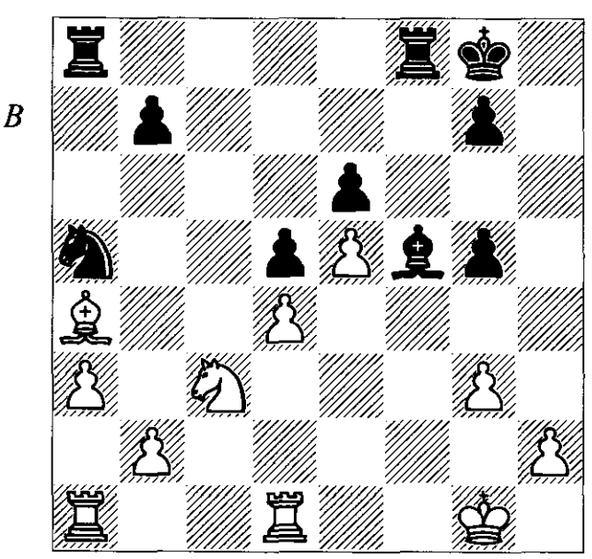
29...♖aa8!?

An ambitious move. Since White no longer occupies the c-file, the c6-knight seeks to infiltrate White's position via a5.

The idea is good but one has to take into account the fact that it implies the loss of the a4-pawn. Black aspires to achieve compensation through the weaknesses he will create in White's camp together with the momentary lack of coordination of the white pieces.

30 ♗b5 ♘a5 31 ♗xa4 *(D)*

Needless to say, 31 ♘xa4? ♘b3 is inadvisable.



31...♘c4 32 b3 ♘b2 33 ♖dc1

Occupying the open file. 33 ♖d2 is met by 33...♘xa4 34 ♘xa4 ♖ac8.

33...♘xa4 34 ♘xa4 ♗h3

White's extra pawn is not important for the time being. To the structural weakness is now added that of the king and the fact that the a4-knight is removed from the fight. Black has reasonable compensation for the pawn – much more so from a practical point of view.

35 ♖a2?

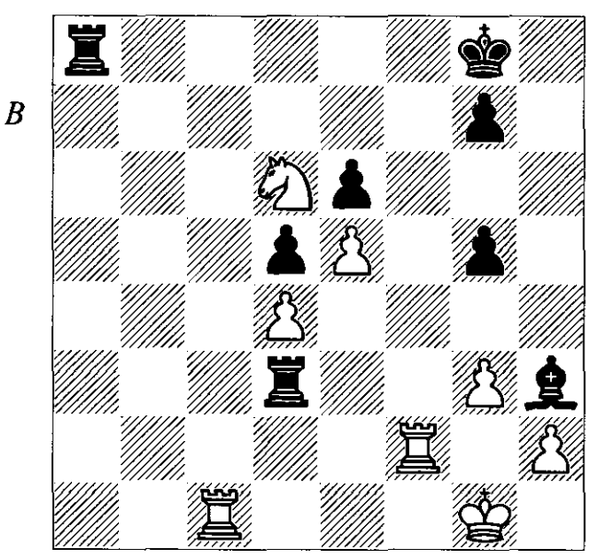
A serious mistake. White wants to play ♖f2, freeing the king, but overlooks Black's strong reply.

It is better to take care of White's greatest problem, namely the absence of the knight, by bringing it back into play with 35 ♘b6! to try to exchange one rook to ease the pressure.

35...♖f3! 36 ♖f2

If 36 ♘b6, now Black can double rooks with 36...♖af8, threatening mate on f1.

36...♖xb3 37 ♘c5 ♖bxa3 38 ♘xb7 ♖d3 39 ♘d6 *(D)*



39...♔h7!

The d4-pawn can wait – now it is the turn of the king to improve its position and help from a more active post. 39...♖xd4 40 ♘f7 would unnecessarily concede counterplay. After the text-move, the king can defend the g5-pawn.

40 ♘b5 ♖b8

The pin is added to White's problems of king safety and the weakness of the d4-pawn.

41 ♖b2 ♖f3

The game was adjourned and this was the sealed move, after which there is no defence.

42 ♖bb1 ♗f5 43 ♖b2 g4

With the idea of playing 44...♗d3, preparing the retreat of the f3-rook to double on the b-file against the defence 45 ♖c5.

0-1

It is amazing that Black could get away with playing 10...♘g8 and 11...♗f8. One has to take into account the closed character of the position, and the excellence of Black's subsequent play, with key moves such as the simplifying 13...♘f5!, solving the space problems, the prophylactic 16...a5!, neutralizing White's ♗d2 in advance, the regrouping 21...♘b8!, and the favourable exchange of the dark-squared bishop after 24...f6! and 26...♗g5!.

It is also essential to have the special talent for manoeuvring that Petrosian possessed. The Dutch grandmaster Hans Ree wrote in an article for *New in Chess* how, as a great admirer of Petrosian, at the beginning of his career he had tried to play the sort of positions in which the Armenian world champion was so extraordinary, but after a few attempts he stopped playing the French Defence, because he would usually end up in difficult positions, without space and without attaining the counterplay Petrosian achieved.

In our next game, the manoeuvres to improve the placement of the pieces, by both sides, take place right after the opening stage is finished.

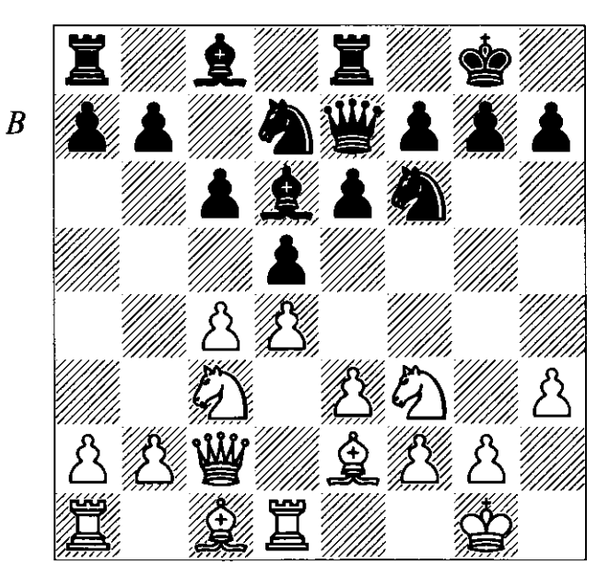
Game 14

Anatoly Karpov – Joel Lautier

Dortmund 1995

Queen's Gambit, Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♘f3 ♘bd7 6 ♕c2 ♗d6 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♕e7 9 ♖d1 ♖e8 10 h3 *(D)*

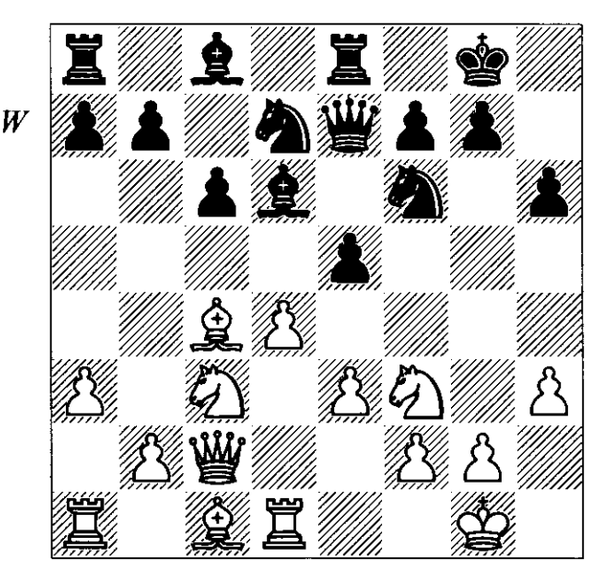


Over the next few moves Black must decide on the destination of his queen's bishop. The most obvious is to play 10...b6 and ...♗b7. Lautier had unhappy memories of this line and decides to vary from Supplementary Game 14.1, Karpov-Lautier, Biel 1992.

10...h6

With the text-move Black signals his intention to play ...dxc4 and ...e5. He must therefore have the g5-square under control, avoiding any unpleasant pressure on f7.

11 a3 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 e5 *(D)*



Threatening to win space by 13...e4. Of course playing now 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 would solve Black's problems of lack of space.

13 ♘h4

With this well-known manoeuvre, White exploits the fact that the move 10...h6 has weakened the f5- and g6-squares, and improves his f3-knight without having to simplify the game before time.

White needs to move his f3-knight in order to free the f2-pawn and be ready to advance his kingside majority when appropriate.

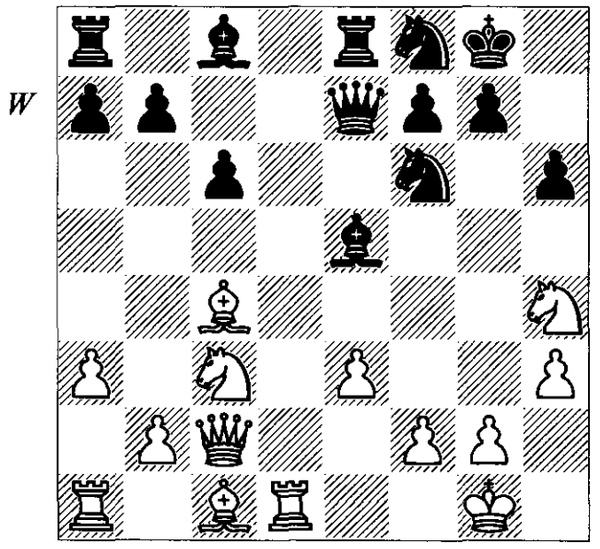
13...♘f8

Trying to become useful on the kingside. The alternative is 13...♘b6, but not 13...e4? 14 ♘g6 ♕d8 15 ♕b3, when f7 is defenceless.

14 dxe5

Winning one of the bishops wouldn't be a bad idea, but having played 10 h3 takes its toll: after 14 ♘f5 ♗xf5 15 ♕xf5 e4! the white queen is in an awkward situation.

14...♗xe5 *(D)*



15 ♗d2

Another idea is 15 ♘f3, which we shall look at in more depth in Game 15.

15...♗c7 16 ♘f5!

If White chose to clear the d-file with 16 ♗e1, Black could transfer his queen to the kingside after 16...♕e5 17 ♘f3 ♕h5, when the two black bishops taking aim at the king's position are felt – combinative themes against h3 are popping up.

16...♕e5 17 ♘g3

The knight has carried out its task of moving to a more useful place. A timely retreat to f1 would confer more security to the white king.

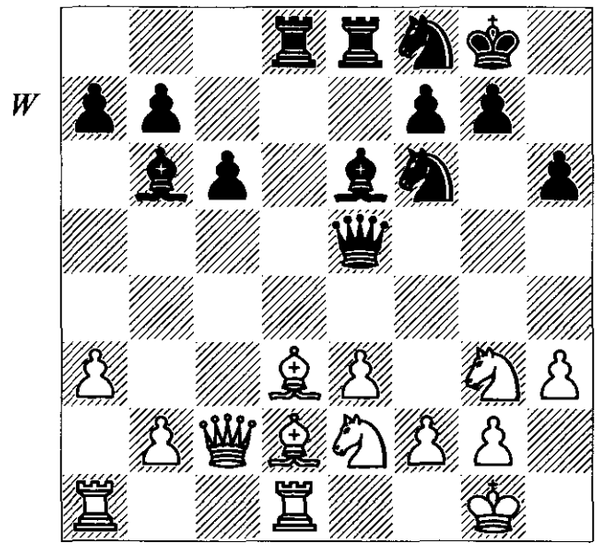
Karpov points out that an alternative plan for White to make progress on the kingside – by pushing the pawns to f4 and e4, or f4 and e5 – is to manoeuvre with the pieces and transfer the c3-knight to f4 or d4, making it possible for the d2-bishop to move to c3. In order to carry out this manoeuvre, which is what White eventually chooses, it is also necessary to place the f3-knight on g3, so that he can control the point e4.

17...♗e6 18 ♗d3

Since Black has mobility problems, White rejects any piece exchange that offers no concrete gains.

18...♖ad8 19 ♘ce2 ♗b6! *(D)*

Black improves the position of his bishop, exploiting the fact that the c3-knight retreated, so there won't be any nuisances with an eventual ♘a4.



How should White play now? There are basically the same two possibilities: to get out of the influence of the b6-bishop with 20 ♔h1 or 20 ♔h2 in order to push the pawns later on, or continue the plan of manoeuvring with the pieces already begun, either with 20 ♘f4 or 20 ♗c3.

20 b4

White doesn't find any advantage in either of those two possibilities at this point and chooses to retain the option of both. He first makes progress on the queenside, and may later decide how to play on the kingside and meanwhile adds the theme of opening the queenside with a timely b5.

But the opponent also has a say, and there is a tactical detail that Black exploits to improve his pieces.

20...♘g6!

Heading for h4, where it would be very dangerous if it got more support.

21 a4!

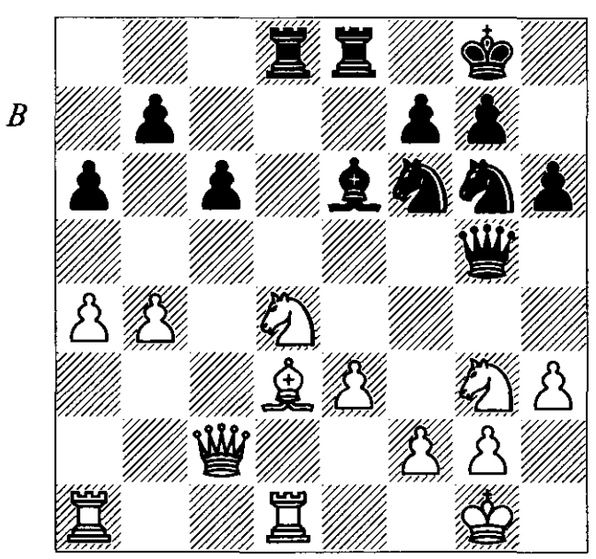
We are at a critical moment when concrete analysis is important. White threatens to drive the b6-bishop away from its dominant post.

Capturing the pawn with 21 ♗xg6 fxg6 22 ♕xg6?? was not possible due to 22...♖xd2, whereas after 22 ♗c3 ♕g5, White manages to double the pawns, but he also concedes the light squares and gives Black more activity.

21...a6

If 21...♘h4?, then 22 a5 ♗c7 23 ♗c3 ♕g5, and White wins material after 24 f4.

22 ♗c3 ♕g5 23 ♗d4 ♗xd4 24 ♘xd4 *(D)*



24...♗d5

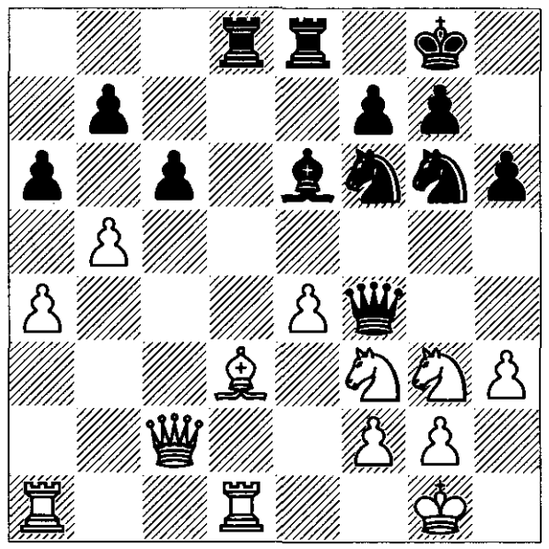
A provocative move that gets Black nowhere.

After the simplifications, 24...♘h4 is still playable, but no longer so frightening. There could follow 25 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 26 ♗c4 (not 26 ♗h7+?? ♘xh7, and the queen defends the d8-rook) 26...♖ed6, and White can try to exploit the absence of the h4-knight by attempting to infiltrate the queenside. The break b5 becomes worth considering; e.g., 27 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 28 b5.

25 e4 ♗e6

There are no combinations against e4 – if 25...♘xe4?, the win is not 26 ♗xe4? ♗xe4 27 ♘xe4 ♕e5!, but 26 ♘xe4! ♗xe4 27 ♗xe4, with ♗xg6 in reserve.

26 ♘f3 ♕f4 27 b5 *(D)*



White has repelled the attack before it even started, but hasn't been able to culminate his plan of advancing his kingside pawns, nor has he been able to exert strong pressure with his minor pieces, so he heads for the other flank.

27...axb5 28 axb5 ♘e5

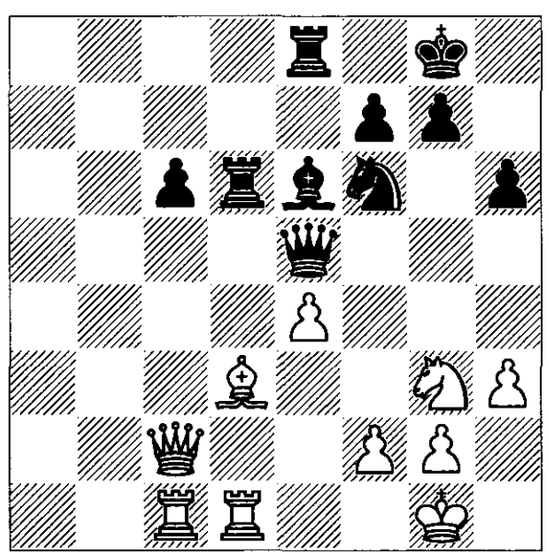
28...cxb5 is somewhat better since Black then ends up with a weak pawn on b7, where it is less vulnerable than on c6. Nevertheless, White keeps a slight edge because his kingside majority is worth more than Black's on the queenside.

29 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 30 bxc6 bxc6 31 ♖ac1

Not, of course, 31 ♕xc6? due to 31...♖xd3!.

31...♖d6 *(D)*

Black can defend more actively by 31...♖c8 in order to play ...♗d7.



With the weakness on c6, White has accomplished something, perhaps not much, but

enough to give him the right to try to increase his advantage – but how?

Increasing the pressure on c6 by itself doesn't seem to get anywhere since Black can defend his weak point without compromising his mobility.

The typical question "which piece can be improved?" doesn't provide a clear answer, but "which piece is it to my advantage to exchange?" does.

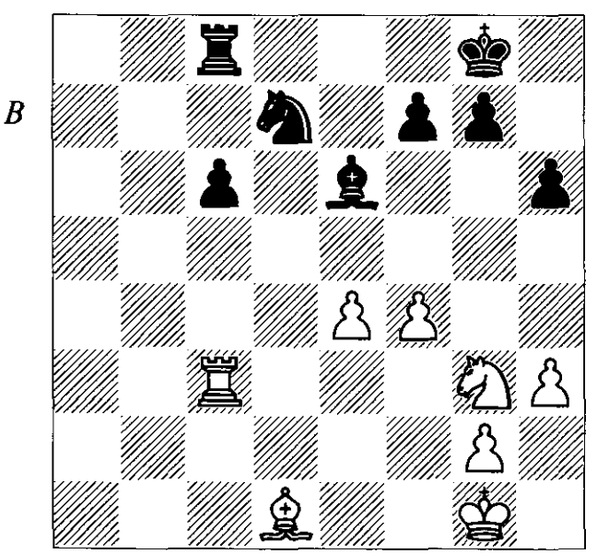
32 ♕c3!

Even though an exchange of queens makes a draw more likely, the black queen is too powerful an enemy – it minimizes the importance of the c6-weakness and prevents the mobilization of White's kingside.

32...♘d7 33 ♗e2 ♖xd1+ 34 ♗xd1 ♕xc3

This somewhat improves the white rook, and allows White to mobilize his pawns. 34...♖c8 is better.

35 ♖xc3 ♖c8 36 f4 *(D)*



Even with very few pieces, White has managed to make progress. His kingside pawns have at last started rolling and the threat of f5 has to be taken into account.

What is the best defence?

36...f6?!

This weakens the position. It is a natural move, vacating f7 for the bishop, and was perhaps made automatically with little time to reach the control. Let's see what Karpov has to say: "The weakening of the light squares, even though he has his light-squared bishop, makes his position very, very vulnerable".

Black should have gone deeper in the position and found out that White's threat was not dangerous. After pushing the passed pawn with 36...c5! 37 f5 ♗a2 White cannot exploit the compromised situation of the bishop, and his advantage cannot be increased in such a clear way as in the game.

37 ♘e2!

Now the imminent ♘d4 is worrying and makes Black commit the decisive error.

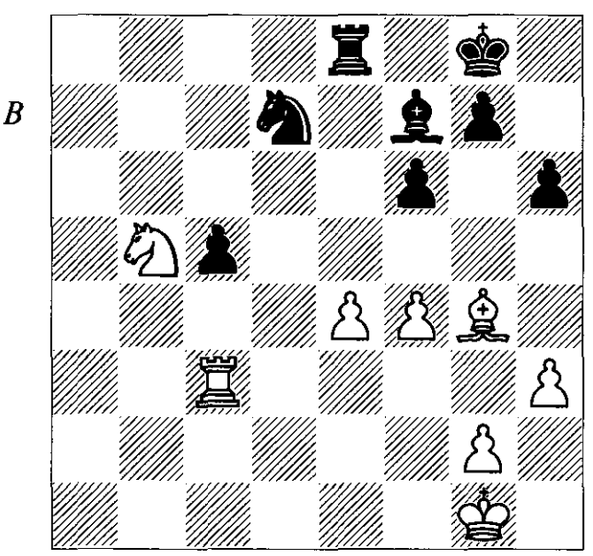
37...c5?

37...♔f8 or 37...♘f8 is better.

38 ♘d4 ♗f7

Abandoning the h3-c8 diagonal, which is immediately exploited by White, but the weakness of the light squares provoked with 36...f6 is felt after 38...♘f8?? 39 ♘xe6 ♘xe6 40 ♗b3, followed by f5, winning.

39 ♗g4 ♖e8 40 ♘b5 *(D)*



40...♘b6

However unpleasant it may be, the most tenacious was to defend the ending a pawn down after 40...♖e7 41 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 42 ♖xc5.

41 ♘d6 ♘a4

This was Black's defensive idea but there are too many fronts to defend – the rook, the knight, the pawn-thrust, and all that just for the time being.

42 ♖a3 ♖a8

This is a new awkwardness – the self-pin he is forced into is very unpleasant.

43 e5!

Threatening 44 e6. Black cannot escape the pin by 43...♘b6? since White wins after 44

♖xa8+ ♘xa8 45 e6 ♗g6 46 f5, followed by 47 e7.

43...♗d5?!

Losing at once. Black had to seek practical chances with 43...fxe5 44 ♗f3 ♖a6 45 ♘xf7 (or 45 fxe5 c4) 45...♔xf7 46 ♗d1 exf4, although in all likelihood it was insufficient.

44 e6! 1-0

The pawn promotes after 44...♔f8 45 ♖e3 ♖a7 46 ♘c8!, followed by 47 e7+ and 48 ♗h5+.

Manoeuvres to improve the position of the pieces were important for most of the game for both sides.

White first improved the position of his f3-knight to pave the way for his e- and f-pawns, and then manoeuvred with his queenside pieces, trying to make progress on the kingside. Eventually he decided not to go for his original plan, changing targets with 20 b4.

Black didn't wait passively and rose to the occasion with 19...♗b6! and 20...♘g6!, which forced White to abandon any aggressive projects. The game was veering towards a draw, but by provoking the weakness on c6, White managed to keep the fight alive despite the few pieces remaining on the board.

That single weakness didn't suffice to tip the balance but with 36...f6?! and 37...c5? Black created another serious weakness on the light squares, which was then enough for a quick white victory.

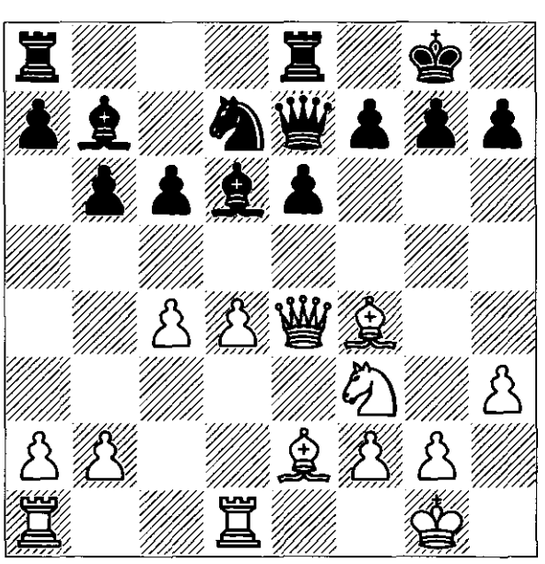
Supplementary Game 14.1

Anatoly Karpov – Joel Lautier

Biel 1992

Queen's Gambit, Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♘f3 ♘bd7 6 ♕c2 ♗d6 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♖e8 9 ♖d1 ♕e7 10 h3 b6 11 e4 dxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♕xe4 ♗b7 14 ♗f4 *(D)*



B

The bishop exchange favours White in principle because several dark squares end up without protection.

14...♖ad8

Karpov showed in *Informator 64* that Black doesn't reach clear equality with 14...c5, due to 15 ♗xd6 ♗xe4 16 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 17 dxc5 ♘xc5 18 b4 ♘a4 19 ♖ac1, when it's easy to see that White controls the open d-file besides having a promising queenside majority, or with 14...♗xf4 15 ♕xf4 c5 16 ♕c7 ♘f6 17 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 ♘e5, when Black has the worse structure, with three pawn-islands against White's two.

15 ♗xd6

Black would indeed get a good game after 15 ♘e5 ♘f6 16 ♕e3 c5, when the black pieces are placed harmoniously. Now he manages to keep a good bishop against a very bad one.

15...♕xd6 16 ♘e5! ♘xe5

Something similar to what we have already seen would happen after 16...♘f6 17 ♕e3 c5 18 dxc5 ♕xc5 19 ♕xc5 bxc5 20 f3.

17 dxe5 ♕c7 18 ♗f3!

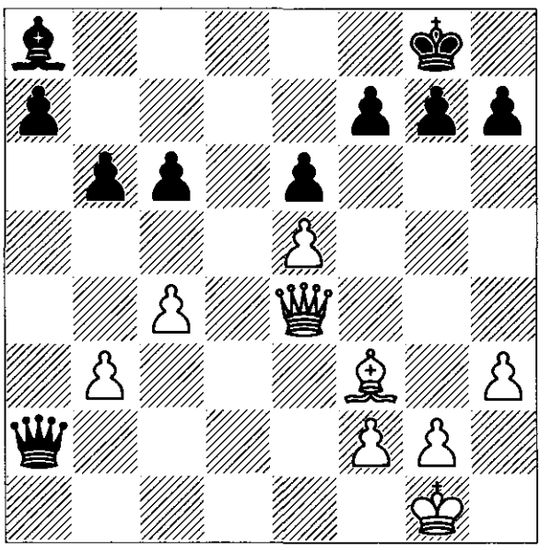
Black hasn't solved the problem of his passive bishop.

18...♗a8 19 ♖xd8!

Ideally White would like to keep the greatest number of pieces so that the inactivity of the black bishop would be more apparent. However, this is not possible because Black is threatening

to free it. White doesn't hesitate to simplify and sacrifice a pawn in order to leave the black bishop inactive, although the game is still finely balanced.

19...♖xd8 20 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 21 ♗xd1 ♕d8 22 ♗f3 ♕d2 23 b3 ♕xa2 *(D)*

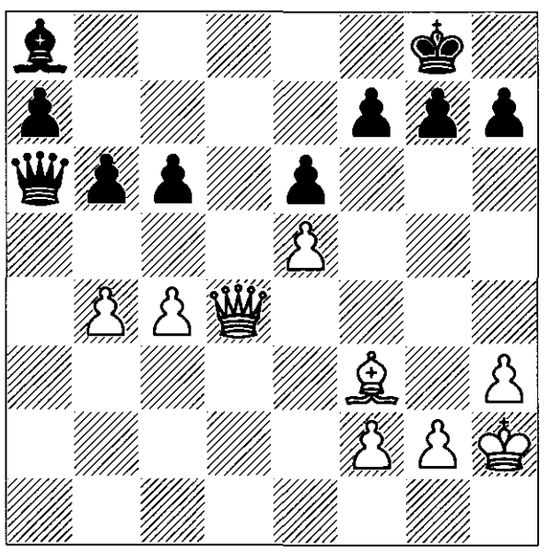


24 b4!

With the potential threat of playing b5. The direct 24 ♕d4 doesn't give anything due to 24...♕a3! 25 ♕d8+ (or 25 ♕d7? ♕a1+! 26 ♔h2 ♕xe5+ 27 g3 and Black is in time to defend everything by 27...♕b8) 25...♕f8 26 ♕c7 c5.

24...♕a1+ 25 ♔h2 ♕a6 26 ♕d4 *(D)*

It is better to keep the threat of b5 latent. Playing 26 b5 immediately doesn't get White anywhere because 26...♕c8 27 bxc6 also leaves Black with a passed pawn and he obtains good counterplay with 27...h6 followed by a quick ...a5.



26...♕c8 27 c5 bxc5 28 ♕xc5

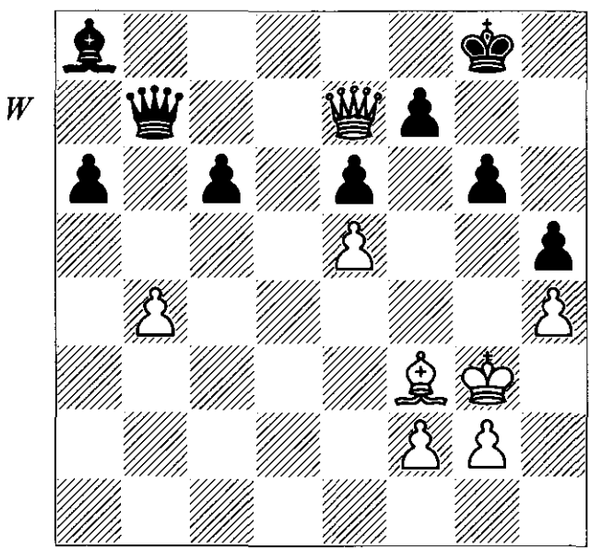
White has compensation for the pawn but not enough to win against good play. However, Black didn't manage to conjure up the best defence.

28...a6 29 ♕e7 g6 30 h4 h5?!

Even though it is not the decisive mistake, this major weakening of the dark squares will have a great influence on the outcome of the game.

31 ♔g3 ♕b7? *(D)*

Better is 31...♕b8! 32 ♔f4 c5!, exchanging at long last his passive bishop with good chances of a draw; e.g., 33 bxc5 ♗xf3 34 gxf3, so as not to lose the e5-pawn. Then the most likely result after the black queen becomes active with 34...♕b1 is perpetual check.



32 ♕xb7!

Even a pawn down White has a winning ending: his plan will be to create a passed pawn on the kingside. The black bishop is still unable to play any active role.

32...♗xb7 33 ♔f4 ♔f8 34 ♔g5

The possible invasion by ♔f6 makes it impossible for Black to bring his king to the queenside in order to free the bishop by playing ...c5.

34...♔e7 35 ♗e4 ♗a8 36 f3! ♗b7

White also wins easily after the sacrifice 36...c5 37 ♗xa8 cxb4 38 ♗c6 b3 39 ♗a4 b2 40 ♗c2.

37 g4 ♗a8 38 gxh5 gxh5 39 f4

White is in no hurry to capture the pawn. First he withdraws his bishop from e4, pre-empting

Black's chance of holding out for longer with the move ...f5.

39...♗b7 40 ♗f3 ♗a8 41 ♔xh5 1-0

In this game the main motif of the struggle was Black's 'bad bishop', which was never able to become active. White didn't hesitate to simplify the game, even though this made a draw more likely. He gave up a pawn to keep the bishop out of play, winning eventually when Black overlooked his best defensive chances.

Game 15

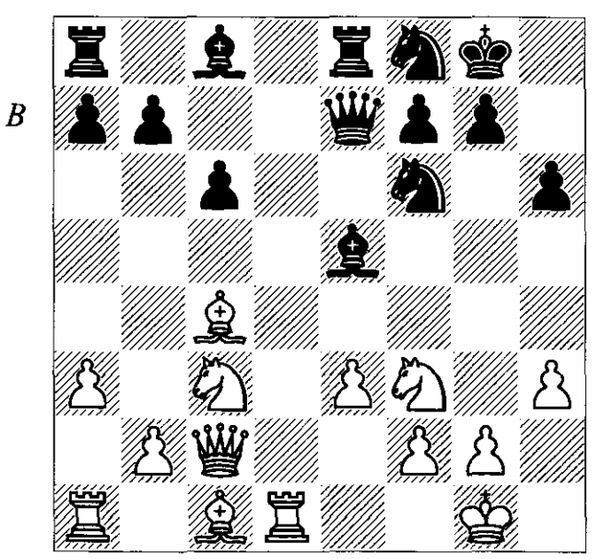
Mikhail Gurevich – Evgeny Sveshnikov

Mariehamn/Österaker 1997

Queen's Gambit, Semi-Slav Defence

This game has the same opening as the previous one but little more in common. White's remarkable manoeuvring allows him to seize control of the game very early on.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 c6 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♕c2 ♗d6 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♖e8 9 ♖d1 ♕e7 10 h3 h6 11 a3 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 e5 13 ♘h4 ♘f8 14 dxe5 ♗xe5 15 ♘f3 *(D)*



15...♗xc3?!

This is a radical decision. White achieves control of e4 but this won't be permanent.

The standard move is 15...♗c7. In his notes to Game 14, Karpov considered that Black would have won a tempo compared to 14...♕xe5 15 ♘f3 ♕e7 because the d6-bishop would already be on c7.

16 ♕xc3 ♘e4 17 ♕c2 ♗f5

Black has completed his development and 'solved' the problem of his c8-bishop. It remains to be seen whether it is the definitive solution to the passive bishop or only an apparent one.

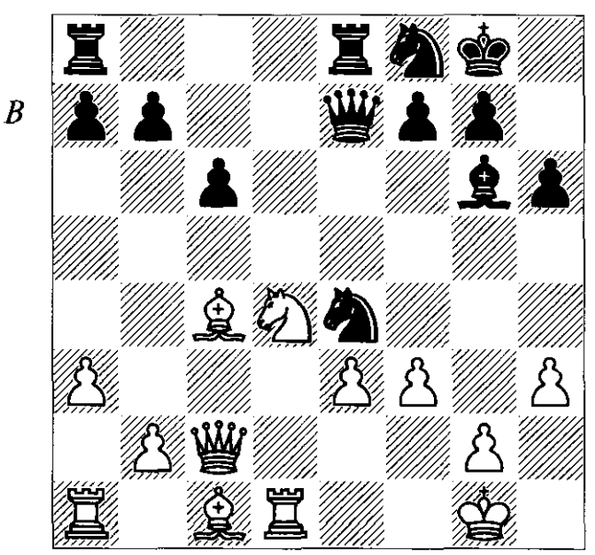
What is White to do?

18 ♘d4!

The first part of the plan, after which, in a few moves, Black's manoeuvre begun with 15...♗xc3 will be put into question.

18...♗g6 19 f3! *(D)*

White is not afraid of any discovered attacks by the e4-knight and thus Black's two most active pieces are driven away.



19...c5

19...♘d6 at once leads to a similar situation.

20 ♘b5 ♘d6 21 e4!

This is the culmination of the manoeuvre begun by 18 ♘d4! – White's pawn-majority wins space and the g6-bishop is the worst affected.

Remarkably, this set-up of pawns with e4 and f3 would also neutralize the bishop if placed on b7.

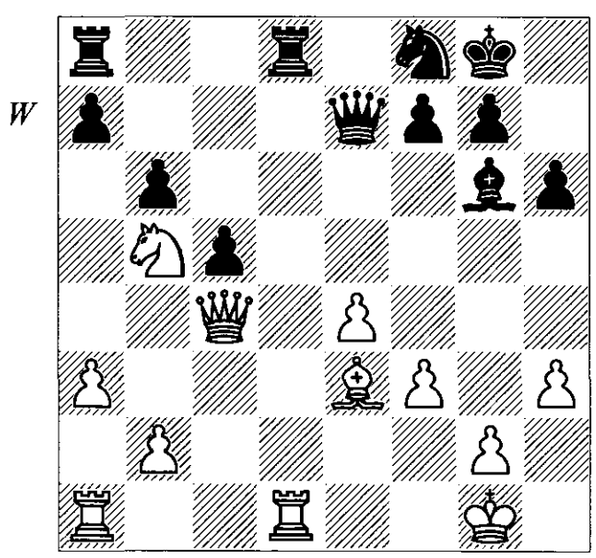
21...♘xc4 22 ♕xc4 ♖ed8 23 ♗e3

Now it can be said more emphatically that Black's idea was unsuccessful – his bishop managed to get into play but now lies inactive on g6, neutralized by White's pawn-chain.

The white centre, unlike in Game 14, doesn't want to advance further: it is ideally placed to give the e3-bishop its best square, and to stifle the g6-bishop. The f8-knight is not well placed either: it is not needed on the kingside to defend, nor can it help to initiate any offensive.

On the other hand, the presence of opposite-coloured bishops is not important now, with so many pieces in play, and as we shall see, it can even help White in the middlegame.

23...b6 *(D)*



How should White continue? The answer to the question "what is my opponent threatening?" is simple – nothing at all for the time being. White therefore has a free hand to make progress, but how?

24 ♘c3!

First things first – the first step is for the b5-knight to head for its ideal place, namely d5.

24...♔h8

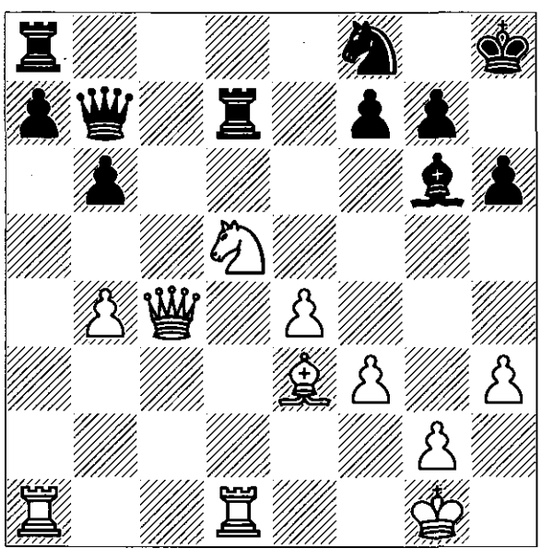
Trying to bring the g6-bishop back into play by a timely ...f5.

25 ♘d5 ♕b7 26 b4!

This is the most promising idea. With this minority attack, the game is opened on the queenside, where White has a great superiority of forces: an extra piece in play at the very least – due to the absence of the g6-bishop.

26...cxb4 27 axb4 ♖d7 *(D)*

Black's idea was 27...f5, but he didn't play it. Let's see an illustrative line pointed out by Gurevich, where White's activity can be felt. White invades Black's camp through the just-opened c-file after 28 ♕c7! ♕xc7 29 ♘xc7 ♖xd1+ 30 ♖xd1 ♖c8 31 exf5 ♗xf5 (31...♖xc7 is met by 32 ♖d8!) 32 ♘b5 a5 33 ♘d6 ♗c2 34 ♖d2 ♖c3 35 ♗xb6, with an extra pawn.



28 ♕a6!

As in the previous game, the exchange of queens gets rid of a vital defender of Black's first two ranks.

It would be strange that with so few pieces on the kingside White could win there, but the strong d5-knight, the two pawns and the initiative attained might encourage the combination 28 ♗xh6? gxh6 29 ♕d4+ f6 30 ♕xf6+, although after 30...♖g7 it is not clear how to continue with the attack. Black can bring his queen to the defence with ...♕f7.

28...♖b8 29 ♕xb7 ♖bxb7 30 ♖dc1

The a1-rook maintains its pressure on the weakness of a7, and the other one occupies the only accessible open file. White therefore keeps his dynamic superiority and prevents Black from freeing himself.

30...♘e6

The freeing 30...f5 is not possible. There could follow 31 ♖c8 ♔g8 32 ♘f4 ♗h7 33 ♘e6 ♖f7 34 ♘d8 ♖bc7 35 ♘xf7 ♖xc8, and now 36 ♘d6, or 36 ♖xa7, when White ends up with an extra pawn.

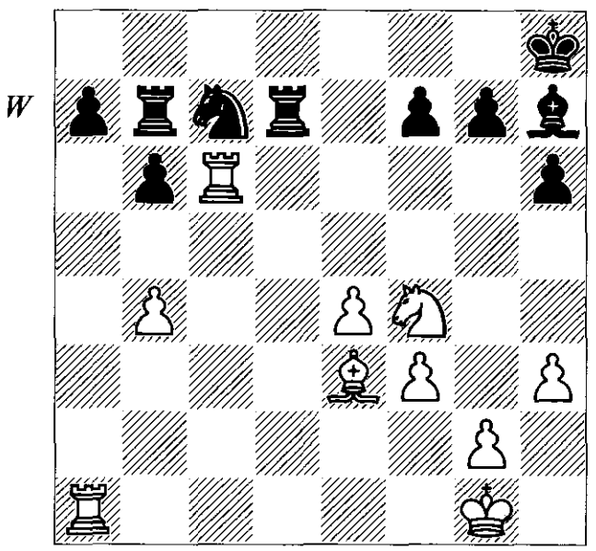
31 ♖c6

Preventing ...f5 and preparing the timely doubling of rooks in order eventually to infiltrate with both.

31...♘c7 32 ♘f4

Of course White doesn't acquiesce to his powerful knight being exchanged by the passive black steed.

32...♗h7 *(D)*



White controls the queenside – there is a weakness on a7, but it is easy to defend. He therefore needs to create a second weakness using his greater activity. How should White achieve this?

33 g4!

Not only ruling out the break but also preparing the kingside advance with h4 and g5, opening up another front in the fight.

33...♗g8

In order to come back to the fight with a timely ...f6.

34 ♖ac1 ♔h7

It is necessary to control g6 before playing ...f6.

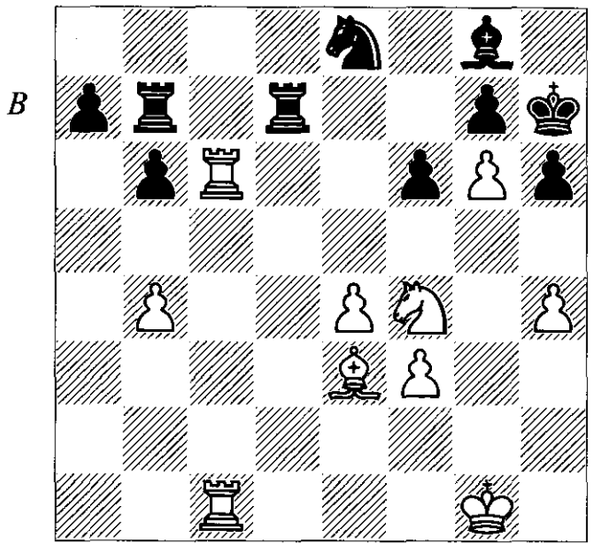
35 h4! f6 36 g5!

White successfully makes progress with his offensive – tactics are on his side, as is to be expected, but calculation is required.

36...♘e8

After 36...hxg5 37 hxg5 fxg5, the strongest continuation is 38 ♘g6!, threatening the fork with check on f8 and clearing the h-file. After 38...♖d8 39 ♔f2! ♘e6 40 ♘e5 g6 41 ♗xg5! White has an irresistible attack, as Gurevich showed; for example, 41...♘xg5 42 ♖h1+ ♔g7 43 ♖xg6+ ♔f8 44 ♖xg5, or 41...♖e8 42 ♗f6 ♘f4 43 ♖c7+ ♖xc7 44 ♖xc7+ ♔h6 45 ♘g4+ ♔h5 46 ♗e7. Other lines: 38...♘e6 39 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 40 ♘f8+ and 38...♖f7 39 ♖1c2 ♖f6 40 ♘f8+!!, mating after 40...♔h8 41 ♖h2+ ♖h6 42 ♖hxh6+ and 43 ♗d4#.

37 g6+! *(D)*

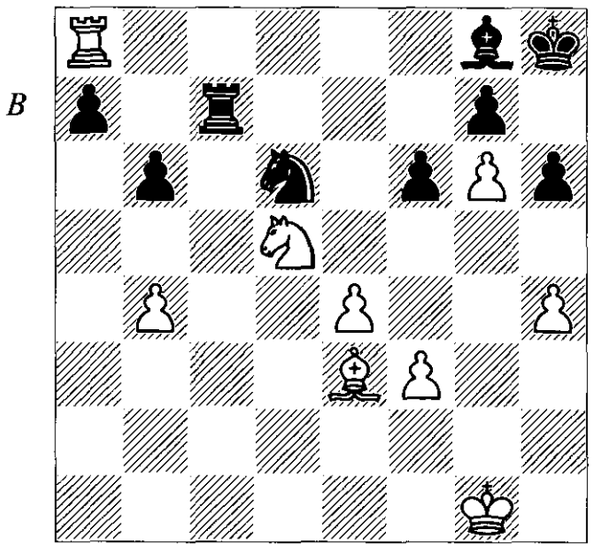


The mate threats render Black's position critical.

37...♔h8 38 ♖c8!

Now the pin of the g8-bishop is added to Black's problems.

38...♘d6 39 ♖a8 ♖bc7 40 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 41 ♖d8 ♘b7 42 ♖a8 ♘d6 43 ♘d5 *(D)*



The knight comes back to its dominant post and Black is virtually defenceless.

43...♖c8

Giving up the a7-pawn, but remaining on the second rank didn't hold out much more hope.

White would place his bishop on d4 with the threat of ♘xf6, exploiting the bad situation of the black king; e.g., 43...♖d7 44 ♗d4 ♘f5 45 ♗c3 ♘e7 46 ♘xf6 ♖d3 47 ♗e5 ♖xf3, and now the quickest is 48 ♖f8!, followed by 49 ♘e8, or 49 h5 if necessary.

44 ♖xa7 b5 45 h5 ♘f5 46 ♗c5 ♘g3

Of course 46...♗xd5 47 exd5 would give White a decisive passed pawn.

47 ♘f4 1-0

Black's idea initiated with 15...♗xc3?! of trying to improve the scope of his inactive queen's bishop wasn't a good decision. Black ended up with his bishop out of play on g6, due to the strong manoeuvre 18 ♘d4!, 19 f3! and 21 e4!, which created a wall against the bishop.

The superiority of forces on the queenside was well exploited, first placing the knight on its ideal square with 24 ♘c3! and 25 ♘d5, so as then to open lines by 26 b4!.

Another key moment was the exchange of queens by 28 ♕a6!, which eliminated a vital defender and left Black's rearguard weakened.

Lastly, in order to convert his advantage White had to create a second weakness. This was prepared by 33 g4!, and then 35 h4! and 36 g5!, after which Black's defence was very difficult.

In the Ruy Lopez 'the Spanish bishop' – the one running on the light squares – is often one of the most unpleasant weapons against Black's kingside because of its remote influence on both f7 and h7.

One of Black's several defensive tasks in the next game was to regroup his pieces to neutralize it, in order to switch to counterattack once that was accomplished. Also the destination and activity of the other black pieces, like the e7-bishop and the c6-knight, were very important in the course of the game.

Game 16

Veselin Topalov – Viswanathan Anand

Sofia 2006

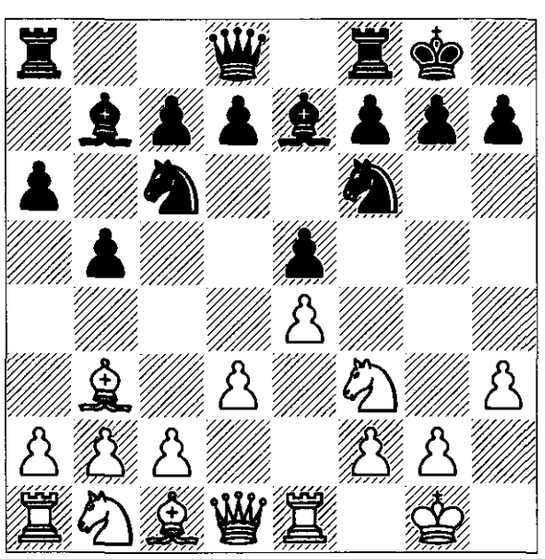
Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 h3

The Marshall Attack would be reached after 8 c3 d5. Lines to avoid it have been popular for some years now, since White hasn't found clear paths to achieve an advantage in the main lines of the Marshall.

The main alternative is 8 a4, which we shall see in Game 17.

8...♗b7 9 d3 *(D)*


B

9...♖e8

A flexible move. Black doesn't play ...d6 yet because he doesn't want to reveal the destination of his f8-bishop – it may go to its natural square, f8, or be played outside the pawn-chain depending on what White chooses.

Another idea behind Black avoiding ...d6 for the time being is to be able to play ...d5 in a single move, if White allows it.

10 c3

White replies in kind, keeping the option of playing a4 or d4. Had he opted for 10 ♘c3 Black could have justified his previous play with 10...♗b4.

If now 10...♗c5, there follows 11 d4.

10...h6

Again Black delays ...d6, making another useful move that is typical in this opening, as it controls g5 and prevents a future ♘g5 by White.

11 ♘bd2 ♗f8 12 a3

White prepares b4 to win space on the queenside but by not setting up any direct threats this gives Black some leeway to manoeuvre.

The quiet situation doesn't allow White to be overconfident and neglect the centre. For instance, 12 ♘h2 is thematic but somewhat rash at this moment, as it removes the knight from the centre and relaxes the pressure on the e5-pawn. It was met in exemplary fashion in Ljubojević-Geller, London 1982. In the first place Black drove the bishop off the a2-g8 diagonal with 12...♘a5 13 ♗c2. Now there were no obstacles to occupying the centre with 13...d5!, and after 14 ♘g4 c5 15 ♕f3 ♘xg4 16 hxg4 d4 17 ♕g3 c4, Black's position was clearly to be preferred.

12 ♘f1, keeping to the 'Spanish' route for the queen's knight, is not accurate either, because now there is nothing preventing Black from occupying the centre by 12...d5!; after 13 exd5 ♘xd5, the reply that usually punishes a hasty ...d5 by Black, namely 14 d4, can be met by 14...e4, since the d2-knight that prevented this advance is no longer there, or with 14...♕d6!, since the black queen cannot be driven away by ♘e4. Black has a good game after 14 ♘g3 ♕d7 15 ♘e4 ♔h8, followed by ...f5.

We see that the d2- and f3-knights carry out useful dissuasive tasks on those squares, preventing active manoeuvres by Black.

12 a4 is another typical move, and we shall examine it in Supplementary Game 16.1, Sashikiran-Sargissian, Zafra 2007.

We now return to the position after 12 a3 *(D)*:

12...d6

Feinting is over – there aren't any more useful moves. As we already know, 12...d5?! is not advisable due to 13 exd5 ♘xd5 14 d4!.

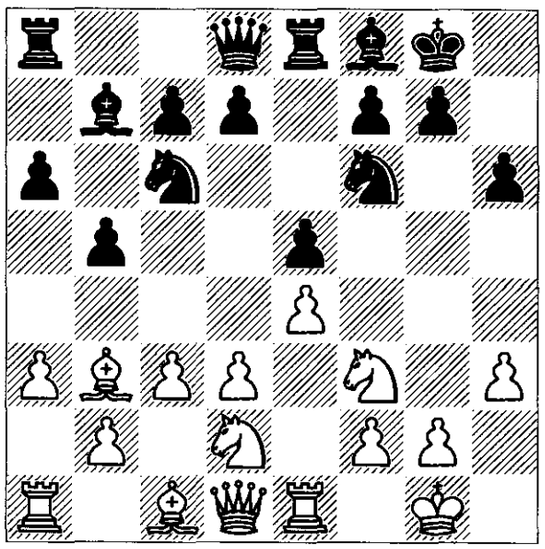
13 ♗a2

How should Black continue now?

13...♘b8!

Black exploits the lack of central tension to redeploy and carry out the ...c5 thrust.

14 b4

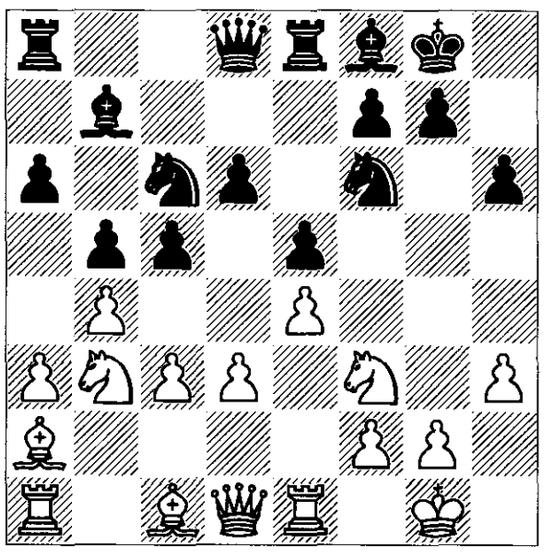

B

This was White's idea. However, he won't be able to stabilize the queenside.

14...c5 15 ♘b3

A strange-looking move, seeking to put pressure on the c5-pawn in order to force it to take on b4. Anand recommended the more natural 15 ♗b2 in *Informator* 97.

15...♘c6 *(D)*

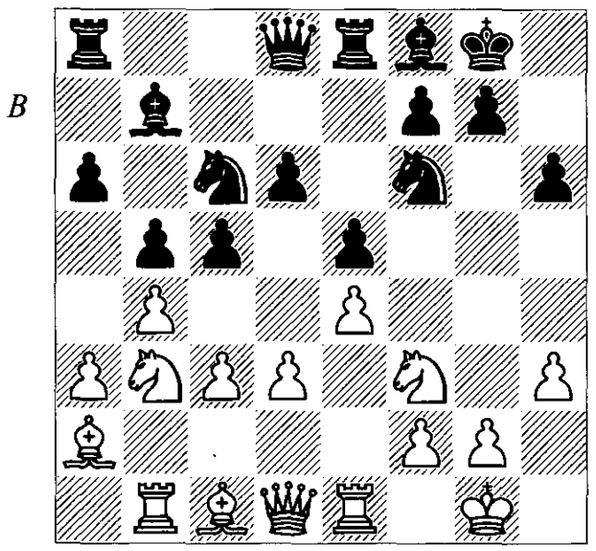

W

In the Breyer Variation Black also plays ...♘b8 to clear the way for the c7-pawn and to improve the dynamism of his knight by bringing it to the more flexible square d7, but here it is best to come back to c6 in order to prevent ♘a5 by White, leaving the b3-knight and the a2-bishop awkwardly placed.

16 ♖b1 *(D)*

The rook creates a potential threat against the b7-bishop. White couldn't keep the pressure on the c5-pawn with 16 ♗e3 due to 16...a5!, when after 17 bxc5 a4 Black is OK, and – unusually

for this opening – even enjoys a space advantage.



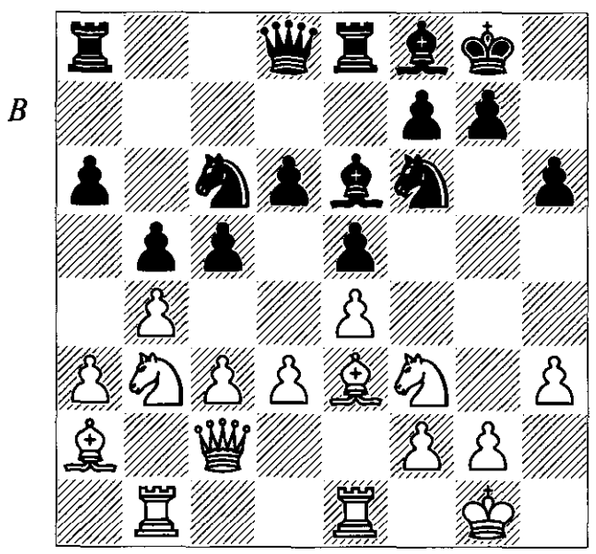
What should Black play now? Is there a piece that can be improved? The answer is not easy. An obvious move would be 16...♖c8, which is playable, but that is all.

If we take into account that manoeuvring play is not only about 'aggrandizing' one's own pieces but also 'dwarfing' the opponent's, we shall have another clue.

16...♗c8!

This is a manoeuvre already considered standard: the b7-bishop is biting granite on e4 so it heads for e6 to neutralize the a2-bishop.

17 ♗e3 ♗e6 18 ♕c2 *(D)*



White seeks some active plan but it is not easy since the advance d4 is virtually impossible. Already it is Black who has some slight initiative.

18...♖c8

It is always nice to bring a piece into play with tempo.

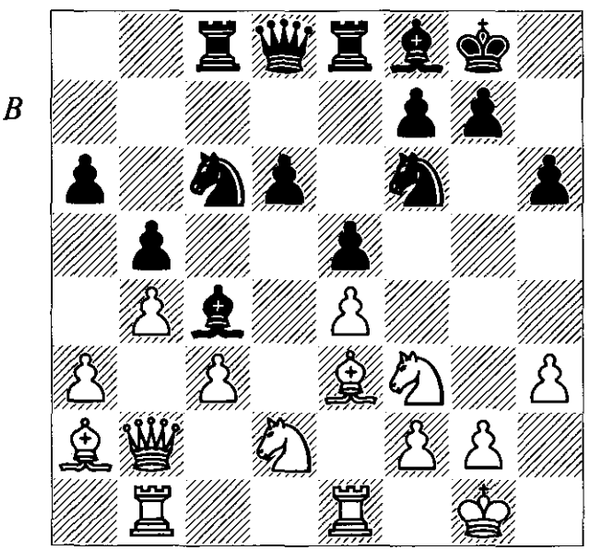
19 ♕b2 c4!

Opening up the game in favour of the better-developed side – Black.

20 dxc4 ♗xc4

Logical. The engines also like 20...♘xe4 but going for complications when having a sound and promising move at hand is not tempting to a human being.

21 ♘bd2 *(D)*



21...♗xa2!

The a2-bishop deserves some respect – in the event of 21...♗d3 22 ♖bd1 ♘xe4 23 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 24 ♗g5! hxg5 25 ♖xe4 Black's king's weakened position provides White with compensation.

22 ♕xa2 d5

Black has centralized his pieces, allowing him to seize the initiative in the centre.

23 ♖bd1 d4

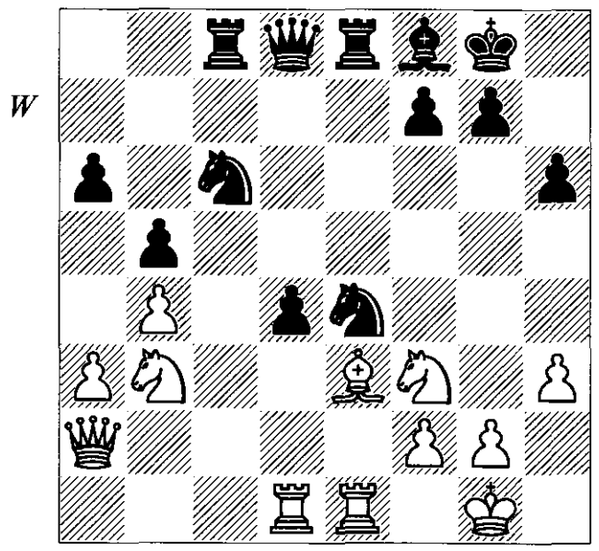
Had Black needed to win at all costs, he would probably have maintained the tension, calmly improving the position of the e8-rook by 23...♖e7, with the idea of continuing 24...♖d7. After 24 exd5, besides 24...♕xd5 25 c4 ♕e6, as Anand points out, 24...♘xd5 25 ♘e4 ♖d7 is interesting, when the combination 26 ♗xh6?!, in order to meet 26...gxh6 by 27 ♖xd5, fails to 26...♘dxb4! 27 ♖xd7 ♘xa2.

24 cxd4 exd4 25 ♘b3?!

White continues to fight for the initiative, rejecting the equality that 25 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 26 ♘b3 gives.

More complicated was 25 ♗f4, when after 25...a5 26 bxa5 the ambitious 26...♕xa5 is met with 27 e5! followed by e6, reminding Black that his kingside is somewhat unprotected. It is safer not to take on a5 and to play 26...b4! instead, which appears satisfactory for Black – after 27 axb4 ♘xb4 he achieves active play. Anand analysed this continuation during the game, although in his notes for *Informator* he preferred 25...♕d7, with a complicated game.

25...♘xe4 *(D)*



26 ♗xd4?

This is indeed a mistake – White possibly overlooked the nice tactical sequence that follows. With 26 ♕b2! he could have held on.

26...♘xd4 27 ♖xd4

The black queen is attacked. What is it that White missed?

27...♘g5!!

A beautiful tactical blow that clearly determines the outcome of the fight.

28 ♘e5

Both 28 ♖xd8 ♘xf3+ 29 gxf3 ♖xe1+ 30 ♔g2 ♖xd8 and 28 ♖xe8 ♘xf3+ 29 gxf3 ♕xe8 are clearly losing because of the weakness of the white king's position.

28...♘xh3+ 29 gxh3

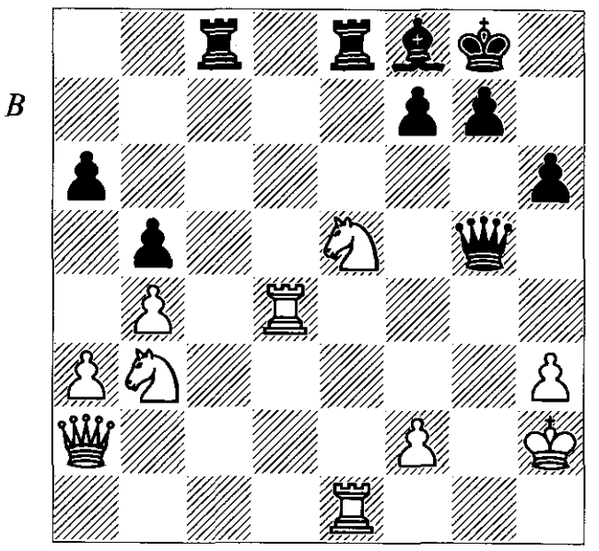
29 ♔f1 ♕g5 wouldn't change much.

29...♕g5+ 30 ♔h2 *(D)*

What winning blow did Anand now deliver?

30...♕f5!!

This beautiful 'quiet move' gets out of the attack f4 and threatens 31...♖c2, effectively ending the game.



Black would have the advantage even after 30...♖xe5 31 f4 ♕g6 32 ♖xe5 ♖c2+ 33 ♕xc2 ♕xc2+ 34 ♘d2. White is a pawn down and his king is weak but he could still hold on.

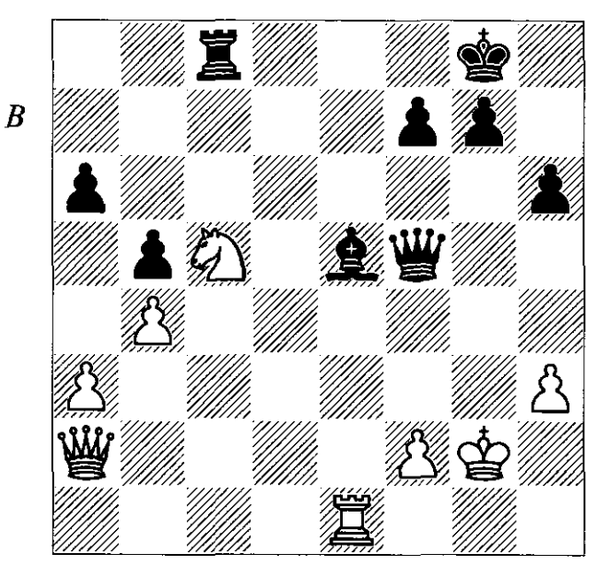
31 ♖de4

If 31 ♘d3, there follows 31...♖xe1 32 ♘xe1 ♖c3, or 32...♕e5+, whereas 31 ♕e2 ♖xe5! 32 ♕xe5 ♕xf2+ 33 ♔h1 ♖c3! 34 ♖h4 ♖xb3 – among others, like the 'Fritzy' 34...♗d6 – is decisive.

31...♖xe5!

The f8-bishop enters the game with elegance.

32 ♖xe5 ♗d6 33 ♘c5 ♗xe5+ 34 ♔g2 *(D)*



34...♖c6!

The last piece remaining joins in the attack.

35 ♕b3 ♖g6+ 36 ♔f1 ♗g3 0-1

The characteristic of this game was flexibility: starting with 9...♖e8 and 10...h6, Black was seeking the best destination for the e7-bishop,

until it became clear that the best square was f8.

Other manoeuvres with the pieces followed: with 13...♘b8! Black cleared the way for the c7-pawn, on its way to c5 to acquire more influence in the centre. White's play dictated that the best place for the b8-knight was c6 again.

Then came the turn to improve the destination of the b7-bishop, not in order to place it on a more active post but to neutralize the 'Spanish bishop' on a2, with 16...♗c8! and 17....♗e6.

White played with originality but the manoeuvre he started with 15 ♘b3 and then 19 ♕b2 was not particularly successful. It was Black who initiated the hostilities in the centre by 19...c4! and 22...d5, safe in the knowledge that he had greater mobility.

The beautiful resolution came from two spectacular blows, 27...♘g5!! and 30...♕f5!!, exploiting the weaknesses provoked in the white king's position and the absence of the white queen.

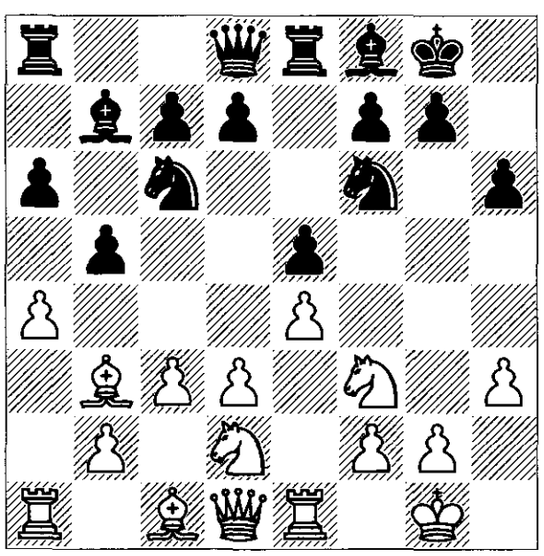
Supplementary Game 16.1

Krishnan Sashikiran – Gabriel Sargissian

Zafra 2007

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 h3 ♗b7 9 d3 ♖e8 10 c3 h6 11 ♘bd2 ♗f8 12 a4 *(D)*



Creating tension on the queenside, which is supposed to favour White. Now 12...d5?! would be premature due to the manoeuvre 13 exd5 ♘xd5 14 axb5 axb5 15 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 16 d4!.

12...♘a5 13 ♗c2

Seeking to play d4, for which White needs to have the e4-pawn protected.

13...c5 14 d4

There are no fewer than five possible continuations in this position. Black can take on d4 in several ways and also play ...d5, but none of these lines convinced him.

14...d6

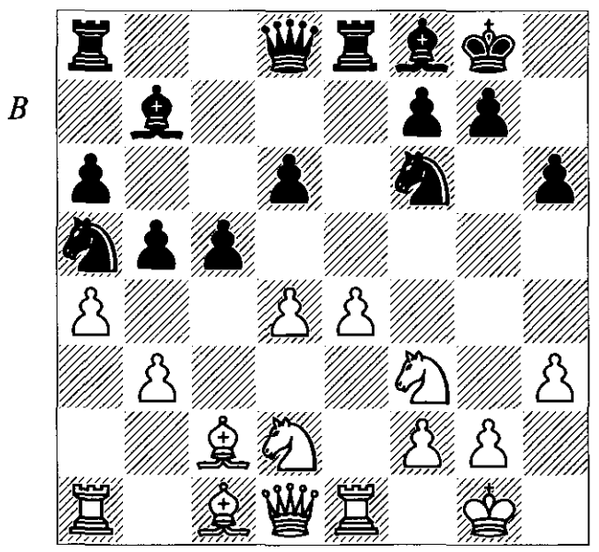
Playing safe.

15 b3?!

We reach a position more typical of the Chigorin Variation of the Ruy Lopez, where Black plays ...♘a5. The text-move tries to keep the tension and develop the bishop at b2 but the course of the game will show that it is inaccurate. Curiously enough in some subsequent lines White would have benefited from having his pawn on b2.

White's thematic move, seeking to highlight the remoteness of the a5-knight, is 15 d5, although Sargissian thinks that after 15...c4 Black gets normal counterplay.

15...exd4 16 cxd4 *(D)*



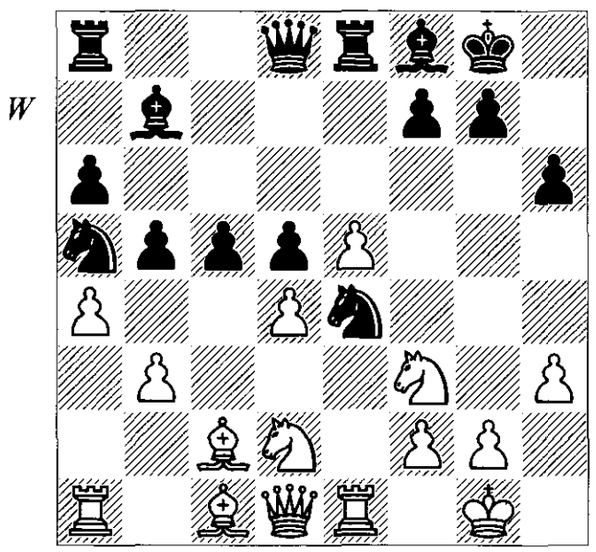
16...d5!

Black can occupy the centre without suffering any punishment, obtaining good play.

17 e5

The most ambitious, trying to keep the queenside pieces out of play, the b7-bishop in particular. This wouldn't be accomplished if White took on d5.

17...♘e4 *(D)*



With the curious threat of 18...♘c3, when Black wins.

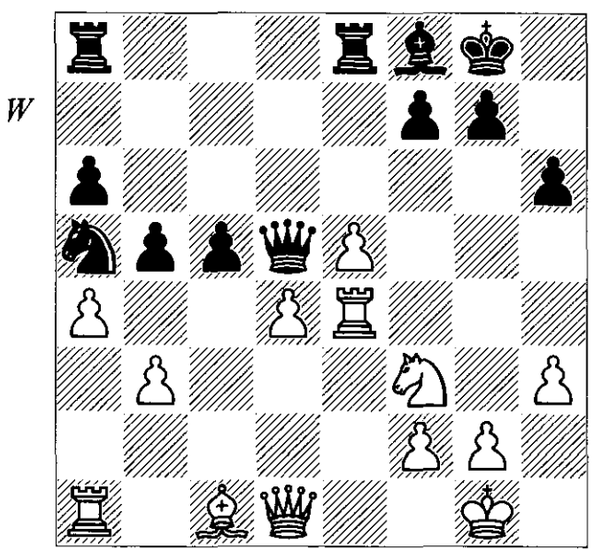
18 ♘xe4?

Remarkably, Sargissian didn't comment on this position. The text-move is certainly not forced; White decides to win the pawn but the booty won't last long. Better was 18 ♗b2! ♘xd2 (the absence of defenders on the kingside must not be forgotten; Black cannot win material with 18...c4 19 ♘xe4 dxe4 20 ♘d2 ♗b4 21 bxc4 bxc4 because White achieves a strong attacking position by 22 ♘xe4! ♗xe1 23 ♘f6+!, when 23...gxf6? 24 ♕g4+ ♔h8 25 ♕f5 leads to mate) 19 ♕xd2 c4 20 axb5 axb5, and here Fritz and Rybka's suggestion is 21 e6!?, trying to create threats on the b1-h7 diagonal by ♗b1 and ♕c2. The best continuation seems to be 21...♖xe6, exchanging rooks, for 21...fxe6?! 22 ♗b1 ♘xb3 23 ♕c2 ♕f6 24 ♕h7+ ♔f7 25 ♘e5+ ♔e7 26 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 27 ♖e3! is too strong.

18...dxe4 19 ♗xe4

The exchange sacrifice 19 ♖xe4 is refuted, not by taking on e4 at once, but with the *zwischenzug* 19...♘xb3!, when by keeping the bishop, Black has no serious weakness on the light squares. There is not enough compensation for the exchange after 20 ♗xb3 ♗xe4.

19...♗xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♕d5 *(D)*



White must now deal with his b3-pawn. Curiously enough, had we reached this very same position without 14...d6 and 15 b3 having been played, White would be better – he could now play the very strong 21 ♖g4.

In this position 21 ♖g4? ♘xb3 22 ♖b1 ♘xd4 is clearly not advisable for White.

21 ♖e3 ♘c6!

The better coordination of Black's pieces, helped by the pin against the white queen, allows him to win the pawn back, keeping his pieces more active. He is already better.

22 ♖d3

It would seem advisable to simplify in order to alleviate the pressure, but 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 doesn't change things much. The threat is 24...♖a1, and if 24 ♗b2, there follows 24...cxd4 and then 25...♗c5. The black pawn is untouchable because of the pin: 25 ♘xd4? loses to 25...♖d8 26 ♖d3 ♗c5.

22...♖ad8 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♗e3?!

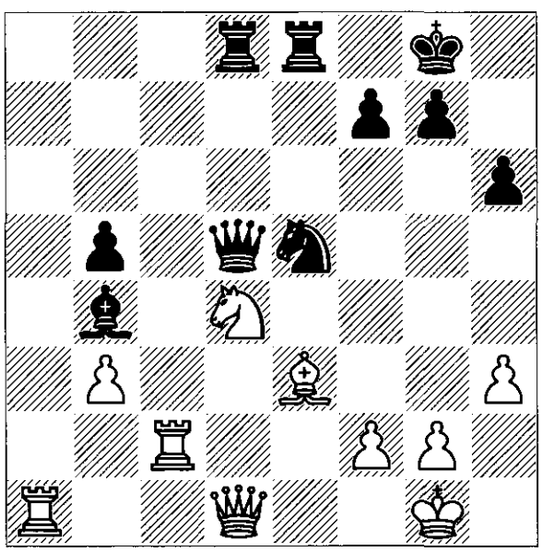
There doesn't seem to be a big difference between defending from here or from b2 but Black will show that 24 ♗b2 was preferable. However, after 24...cxd4 25 ♘xd4 ♘xe5 (not 25...♗c5? because of 26 ♘xc6! ♕xd3 27 ♘xd8, with equality) 26 ♖d2 ♗b4! 27 ♖e2 ♗c5 28 ♖d2 ♕e4! Black keeps the initiative thanks to all his centralized pieces.

24...cxd4 25 ♘xd4?!

25 ♗xd4 is more resilient; e.g., 25...♗c5 26 ♖a2! ♗xd4 (Black wants more than just winning the exchange with 26...♘b4 27 ♗xc5 ♘xd3 28 ♗d6 ♕e4, which is also good) 27 ♖ad2 (27 ♘xd4? loses to 27...♘b4), and now the blow 27...♗xf2+! 28 ♔xf2 ♕c5+ gives Black the advantage because the white king remains exposed and the isolated e5-pawn is very weak.

25...♘xe5 26 ♖d2 ♗b4 27 ♖c2 *(D)*

Now this move is necessary to defend against ...♗c3 – with the bishop on b2 this would not have been the case.



How should Black make progress now? All his pieces are active, in almost ideal locations. 27...♕e4, trying to double rooks on the d-file, is good but... is there something more?

27...f5!

Black considers that it is no longer necessary to improve any piece significantly in order to make progress, and that it is possible to make way with the infantry, with the mortal threat of 28...f4. Of course now 28 g3 would weaken the f3-square decisively. The forks would be winning after 28...♗c5 or 28...♕e4, followed by ...♖xd4. White, with his passive pieces, cannot exploit the weakening of the black king's position, although he tries to do so as a last resource.

28 ♖c7 f4 29 ♕h5

Or 29 ♖aa7 ♗f8, and White loses a piece.

29...fxe3

With a decisive material advantage.

30 ♖xg7+

As good as any other move – in time-trouble only a helpmate can save White. Black repels White's attack very easily indeed.

30...♔xg7 31 ♘f5+ ♔f6 32 ♖a6+ ♖e6 33 ♕xh6+ ♔xf5 34 g4+ ♘xg4!

Not falling for the above-mentioned helpmate: 34...♔e4?? 35 ♕xe3#.

35 hxg4+ ♔xg4 36 ♕g7+ ♕g5 37 ♕xg5+ ♔xg5 38 ♖xe6 exf2+ 39 ♔xf2 ♖d5 0-1

In this supplementary game, Black played in a classical manner, reaching positions typical of the Chigorin Variation. White mistakenly left two pieces badly placed by not playing the typical manoeuvre 15 d5. After 16...d5! Black seized the initiative, giving up a pawn that White riskily accepted with 18 ♘xe4?. Then after 21...♘c6! his way to equality was no longer clear. Black won by playing forcefully with 27...f5!, which virtually ended the game.

Game 17

Hou Yifan – Penteala Harikrishna

Paks 2007

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Anti-Marshall

In this game Black's lack of space is solved both with standard play as well as with an original manoeuvre on the kingside.

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4

This is another Anti-Marshall line that is very fashionable. Black has several possible replies, such as 8...♗b7 and 8...♖b8, each move having its pros and cons. Black decides to push his pawn, which is the most popular continuation.

8...b4 9 d3 d6 10 a5

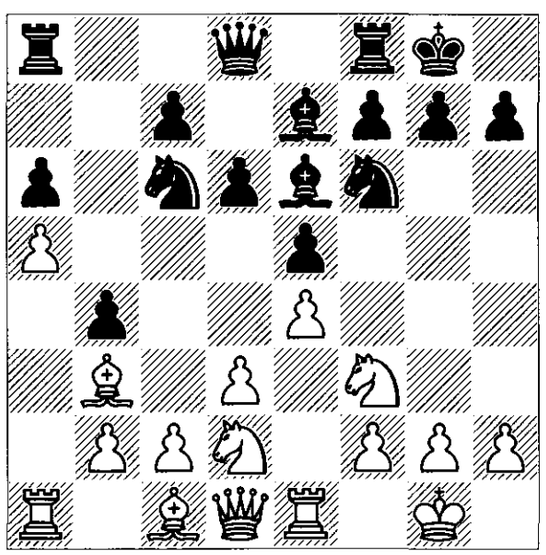
White avoids ...♘a5, followed by ...c5, which could follow after 10 ♘bd2, although this move is also popular.

10...♗e6

Here we see one of the ideas behind Black playing 8...b4: unlike in Game 16, Black neutralizes the white bishop by playing ...♗e6 forthwith, without having to resort to ...♗b7-c8-e6, as Anand did.

The capture 11 ♗xe6 is not to be feared because the advantages Black obtains from ending up with doubled pawns are greater than the drawbacks. It is not possible to exploit or even put pressure on this weakness. The e6-pawn controls the important squares d5 and f5, and since the one on e5 does the same with d4 and f4, White wouldn't have a clear plan.

11 ♘bd2 *(D)*



Black has now several possibilities. One is to exchange the bishops but since the exchange on e6 is not to be feared, this is not the most flexible move in the position. The prophylactic 11...♖b8 is also worth considering: deeming that one of White's plans is to play c3, Black occupies in advance the file that might be opened. Furthermore the rook can eventually be moved to b5, hitting the a5-pawn. We are in a theoretical position and both moves have been tested frequently.

11...♕c8

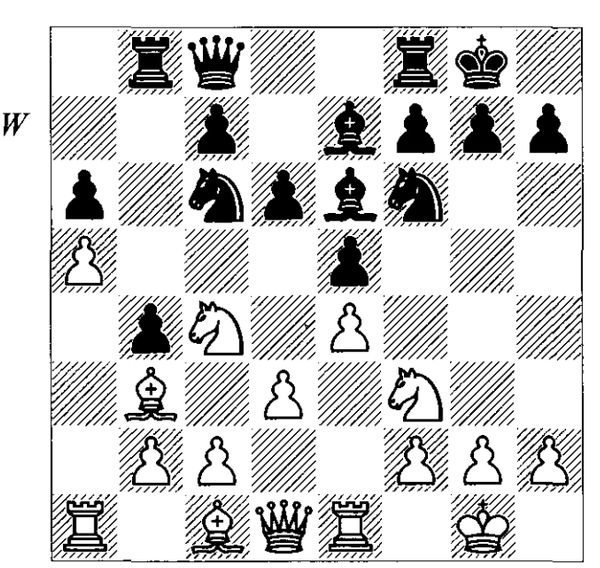
This interesting move, currently the most usual, is an idea of Ivan Sokolov that has many virtues. It vacates the d8-square, which can be occupied by the f8-rook to support an eventual ...d5. The knight too can be recycled from c6 to e6, and since the bishops are very likely to be exchanged, the queen will take control of the light squares, either on the h3-c8 diagonal from e6, or from b7 or b5.

12 ♘c4

White decides to develop the c1-bishop along the c1-h6 diagonal. One of the main alternatives is 12 ♗c4, with the idea of playing b3, ♗b2 and later on, if possible, d4. In Akopian-Svidler, Wijk aan Zee 2004, White achieved good control of the light squares after 12...h6 13 h3 ♖e8 14 b3 ♗f8 15 ♗b2 ♕d7 (preventing 16 d4, which would be met by 16...♘xd4 17 ♘xd4 ♗xc4 18 ♘xc4 exd4 19 ♕xd4 ♕c6, when the advance ...d5 is in the offing) 16 ♕e2 ♗xc4 17 ♘xc4 (White now has the better bishop and controls the light squares but in order to make progress he will have to play d4 at some point, and therefore this factor is not so important) 17...g6 18 ♘h2 ♗g7 19 ♘g4 ♘h7 20 ♘ge3 f5 21 ♘d5 f4 22 d4, with a slight edge for White.

12...♖b8 *(D)*

The history of this move, about whose virtues we already talked in a previous position, is a curious one. Aronian explains that he has played 12...h6 twice, but in fact the second time, also in Linares, was only because of a mix-up. His analysis indicated that it was not necessary to prevent ♗g5 but the jet lag after the trip from Morelia (Mexico) to Linares (Spain) to play the second half of the tournament made him forget about 12...♖b8 and play 12...h6 again against Svidler two rounds earlier.



13 h3

Controlling g4 in order to lend strength to the eventual ♘g5. 13 ♘g5 at once was not to

be feared because the continuation could be 13...♗g4 14 f3 ♗d7, when after 15 f4 there follows 15...exf4 16 ♗xf4 ♘d4!, threatening the b3-bishop. Black will have a more active game after the bishop comes back to g4, as Ponomariov explains.

In the aforementioned game Leko-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2006, 13 ♗g5 was played. We shall examine it in Supplementary Game 17.1.

13...h6

Now 14 ♘g5 had to be stopped.

14 ♗e3

What now? Black can play 14...♖d8, or 14...♖e8 and then ...♗f8, and perhaps later on, depending on what White does, the break ...d5.

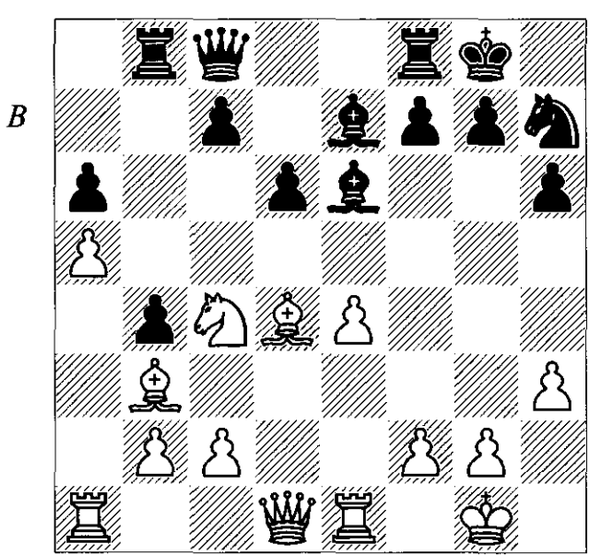
14...♘h7

A move that momentarily abandons the centre, but one of the ideas behind it is to play ...♘g5, with which he would gain control over d4.

15 d4

The natural reaction, seeking to exploit the absence of the f6-knight, which is no longer putting pressure on e4.

15...exd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 *(D)*



What should Black play now? Bringing the h7-knight back to the centre with 17...♘f6 could seem reasonable but after 18 e5! dxe5 19 ♘xe5 ♗xb3 the zwischenzug 20 ♘c6 is unpleasant.

What other piece can Black improve? The way White punishes ...♘f6 can give us a clue.

17...♖b5!

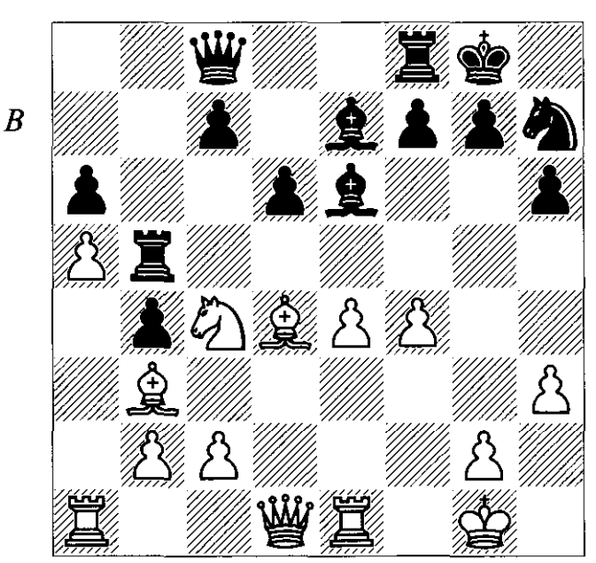
A nice manoeuvre by the rook. This is a multi-purpose move that not only puts pressure on the a5-pawn but also controls e5, supports a possible ...d5, and makes it possible to switch to the kingside depending on the circumstances.

18 f4?! *(D)*

Straightforward play – once the pawns are exchanged on e5 the young Chinese prodigy will embark on an attack. However, this attack will be stopped, and White will then regret having pushed her f2-pawn.

Of course, without the knight on f6, 18 e5? doesn't work because Black seizes the initiative by 18...d5 and 19...c5.

18 ♕d3 is calmer, connecting the rooks and defending the c4-knight so that White can drive away the b5-rook with ♗a4 if the occasion requires it. Black could reply 18...♗f6, somewhat simplifying the game in order to have more space for his pieces. After 19 ♗xf6 (19 ♗a4 is too provocative, and can be met by 19...♗xd4 20 ♕xd4 ♖h5, threatening 21...♗xh3, and with good play after ...♕b7 and ...♘f6, redeploying all the black pieces to comfortable positions) 19...♘xf6 20 e5 dxe5 21 ♘xe5 ♗xb3 any way White recaptures leaves her slightly better.



18...♗f6

Trying to win mobility through the bishop exchange. The black pieces are not yet coordinated well enough to play 18...d5?. There would follow 19 exd5 ♖xd5 20 ♘b6!, exploiting the unfortunate situation of the bishops on the e-file. Then 20...♖xd4 21 ♘xc8 ♗c5 fails to 22

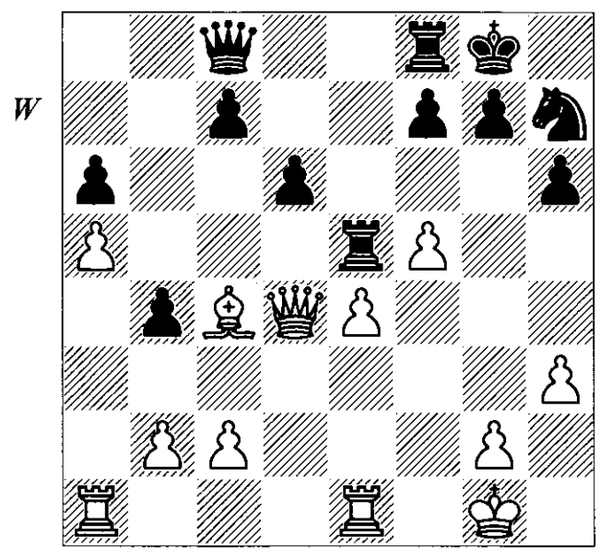
♘e7+! ♔h8 23 ♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 24 ♔h2, when White is the exchange up.

19 f5

Against the timid 19 ♗f2 Black could indeed play 19...d5! 20 exd5 ♖xd5, followed by 21...♖fd8 for instance, with good play.

After a less sharp move, Black would play 19...♗xd4+ and ...♘f6, already without the tactical weakness of the e7-bishop. What now follows is a forced sequence.

19...♗xc4 20 ♗xc4 ♗xd4+ 21 ♕xd4 ♖e5 *(D)*



Black has managed to equalize. A different picture would emerge if the dark-squared bishops were on the board, but now Black has the e5-square at his disposal, and there's a weakness on e4.

What does White have? There is a very apparent weakness on a6 – whether it can be exploited is a different matter. Let's suppose White could play 22 ♕xa6 right now – Black needn't fear even this because after the exchange of queens there would follow ...♖a8 regaining the pawn.

22 ♕d3?

White wants to play 23 ♗xa6 but the creation of a passed pawn won't worry Black.

White can keep the balance with 22 ♕a7, and then play the endgame. Another possibility is 22 ♗d3 ♕b7 23 ♖a4 ♖b8 24 ♕c4, when a draw by repetition with 24...♖b5 25 ♕d4 ♖e5 is the most likely outcome. Black can also try 24...♕a7+, with the point that 25 ♔h2? allows 25...d5 26 ♕xa6 ♕c5, and in the complications the lack of protection of the e1-rook will be important. However, 25 ♔h1! prevents this idea because the king is then not exposed to ...♘g5-f3+ ideas.

22...♘f6! 23 ♗xa6 ♕a8 24 ♗b5 ♖b8! 25 ♗c4 ♖xa5

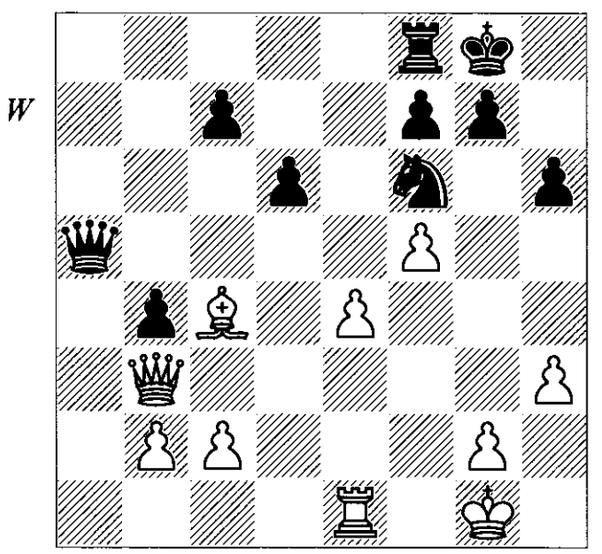
All the black pieces have become active and material is even. White's position is now awkward – the weakness of e4 is something that can become worrying.

26 ♖xa5 ♕xa5 27 ♕b3

If 27 ♕d4, trying to get rid of his weakness by a timely e5, there would follow 27...♖e8.

27...♖f8 *(D)*

The rook's passivity will only last a few moves.



28 ♔h1 ♕c5 29 c3?!

White doesn't want to wait passively for Black to improve his position by either playing ...c6 in order to control d5, or manoeuvring with ...♘d7-e5 thus freeing the f8-rook.

Nevertheless this move creates another weakness on c3.

29...bxc3?

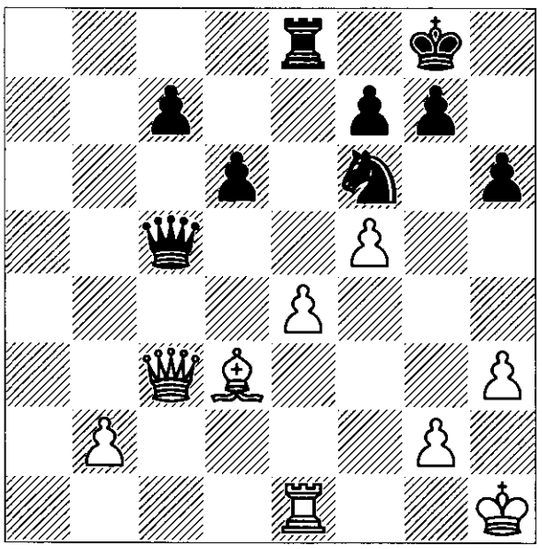
This move has a tactical drawback which allows an equalizing continuation. After 29...♕e5! a position similar to the game would be reached after 30 ♗d5 (or 30 ♕xb4?! d5!) 30...bxc3 31 ♕xc3 ♖e8 32 ♗c6 ♕xc3 33 bxc3 ♖e5, when Black is master of the dark squares, whereas White has two weaknesses to worry about, e4 and c3, with an awkward bishop. The defence would be very unpleasant.

30 ♕xc3?

This doesn't make the most of Black's inaccuracy. After the *zwischenzug* 30 e5! dxe5 31

♕xc3, the threat of 32 ♗xf7+ allows White to get rid of her main weakness and regain the pawn. If the black queen moves to save her own skin, there follows 32 ♖xe5, with a game close to equality, while 31...♘d7 is met by 32 f6!, opening up the defences of the black king, since Black cannot take with the knight. Neither 32...gxf6? 33 ♖d1 ♕e7 34 ♕g3+ ♔h8 35 ♕h4 ♔g7 36 ♕g4+, winning, nor 32...g6? 33 ♖d1 is any good to Black.

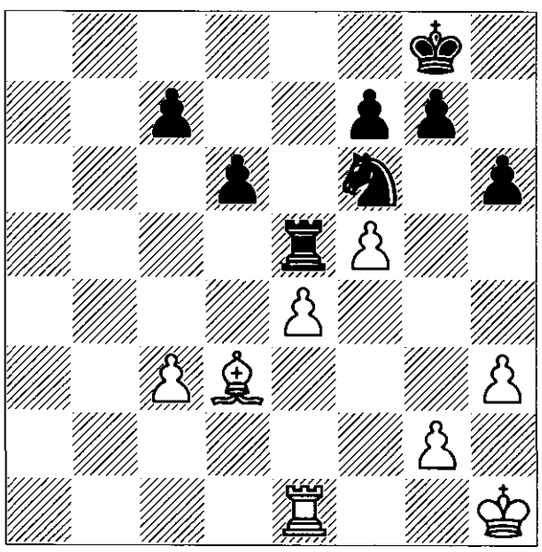
30...♖e8 31 ♗d3 *(D)*



A sad and forced retreat – the ending is very unpleasant for White.

31...♕xc3 32 bxc3 ♖e5! *(D)*

It was already possible to play a rook endgame a pawn up after 32...d5 33 e5 ♘e4 34 ♗xe4 ♖xe5, but there is no rush. Black can improve his position, whereas White can't.



33 ♖e2 ♔f8 34 ♔g1 ♖c5 35 ♖c2

Putting yet another pawn on a light, and weak, square with 35 c4 was obviously dreadful. There would follow 35...♘d7, and after 36 ♖c2 ♖a5, Black would slowly but surely invade White's camp.

35...d5!

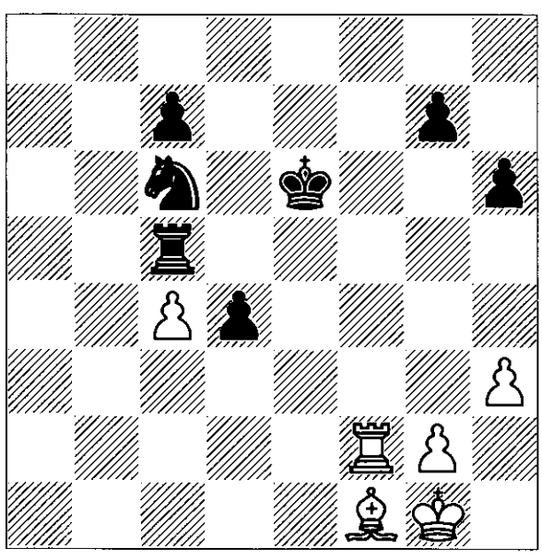
Black can afford to open up the game and exchange the weakness on e4 because his two pieces are much more active.

36 e5

This is not good – it will lead to the loss of the pawn without getting anything in exchange.

However, Black also wins a pawn after 36 exd5 ♖xd5 (seeking more than the rook endgame with an extra pawn after 36...♘xd5 37 c4 ♘b4 38 ♖c3 ♘xd3) 37 ♖d2 ♘e4 38 c4 ♖d4 39 ♖d1 ♘d6.

36...♘d7 37 e6 ♘e5 38 ♗f1 d4 39 c4 fxe6 40 fxe6 ♔e7 41 ♖d2 ♘c6 42 ♖f2 ♔xe6 *(D)*



With an extra pawn and with the weakness still on c4, the rest is simple.

43 ♖f8 ♖f5 44 ♖e8+ ♔d6 45 ♗d3 ♖e5 46 ♖g8 ♖e7 47 ♔f2 ♔c5 48 ♖a8 ♘e5 49 ♖a5+ ♔b4 50 ♖b5+ ♔c3 0-1

Black's lack of space was well administered right out from the opening with the theoretical moves 11...♕c8 and 12...♖b8, which opened up the prospects not only of those pieces, but also of the f8-rook and c6-knight.

The unnatural 14...♘h7 allowed the passive e7-bishop, a cause of concern in some lines, to move to f6 and be swapped by its white counterpart, reaching a balanced game.

White's endeavours to attack, first on the kingside with the advance 18 f4?! and then against the a6-pawn with 22 ♕d3?, led her to an inferior game, which she was not able to hold.

As Lasker used to say "there are always chances" and "seek and you will find". That possibility appeared when Black played 29...bxc3?, and White had the chance to equalize, which she squandered.

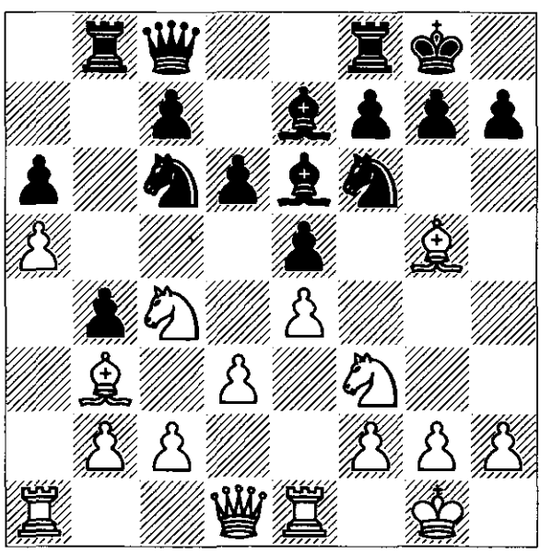
Supplementary Game 17.1

Peter Leko – Levon Aronian

Morelia/Linares 2006

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4 b4 9 d3 d6 10 a5 ♗e6 11 ♘bd2 ♕c8 12 ♘c4 ♖b8 13 ♗g5 *(D)*



The fact that he had played 12...h6 repeatedly could be taken to mean that Aronian was afraid of this move, but as we noted this was not the case – it was rather the result of jet lag.

Here Aronian produced an original idea, and a very good one at that: to try to regroup his forces in a very unusual way.

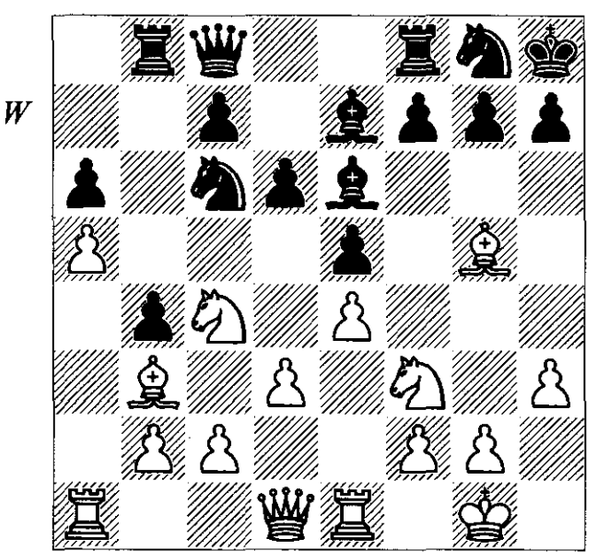
13...♔h8!

Aronian explained that, as in some lines of the Italian Game where Black plays ...♘g4 and ...f5, here he plans ...♘g8, and then ...f5. The bishop exchange is welcomed by Black, who can play ...♘g6 afterwards, with useful kingside play.

14 h3

Trying to play c3 and d4. White needs to have the g4-square under control when he plays d4 to avoid the pin. In Monaco, shortly after this game, Leko preferred the direct 14 d4 against Anand. Black followed Aronian's idea, 14...exd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 16 ♕xd4 ♘g8 17 ♗f4 f5.

14...♘g8 *(D)*



15 c3?!

Consistent, but it won't be successful. 15 ♗xe7 ♘gxe7 16 ♘g5 was not promising because Black gets good play after 16...♘d4 17 ♗a2 and here the thematic sacrifice 17...b3!, damaging White's structure. After 18 ♗xb3 ♘xb3 19 cxb3 ♘c6 (trying to play ...♘d4) 20 ♘f3 there are several ideas, like 20...f5, or preparing the ...d5 break with 20...f6 to defend the e5-pawn. In the post-mortem 15 ♗d2 was analysed: after 15...f5 16 ♘e3 ♗xb3 17 cxb3 fxe4 18 dxe4 ♗d8, the conclusion was reached that White is somewhat better but Black has no serious reasons to be worried.

15...bxc3 16 bxc3 f5

The opening of the b-file is something the b8-rook is grateful for, and the black forces are active on the kingside too.

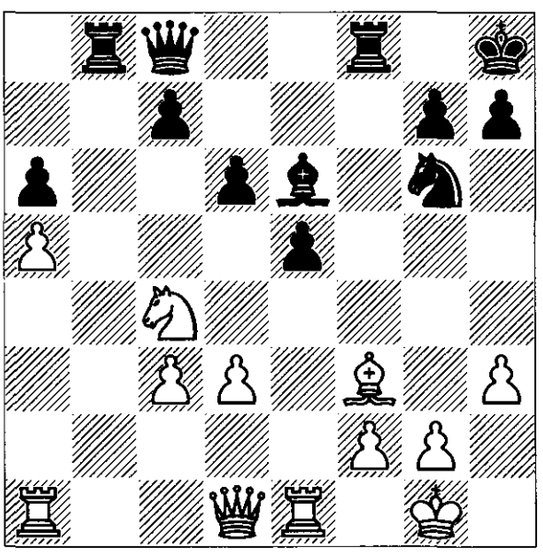
17 ♗a4?

White should have accepted a somewhat inferior position with 17 exf5 ♗xf5 18 ♘e3. Now there is a series of exchanges and when the situation clears up the outcome will favour Black.

17...fxe4 18 ♗xc6

Forced – if 18 dxe4?, then 18...♗xc4 19 ♗xc6 ♖xf3!, while 18 ♖xe4 ♗d5 is unpleasant too.

18...exf3 19 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 20 ♗xf3 ♘g6 *(D)*



A complete triumph of the regrouping started with 13...♔h8!. Black has successfully opened the f-file, the black knight has improved its position and is heading for the f4-square, and there are tactical themes against h3. On the other hand, little or nothing positive can be said about White.

21 ♗g4

Neutralizing the strong e6-bishop.

21...♘f4 22 ♖a2?

A decisive tactical mistake. If 22 ♘e3 Aronian hesitated between activating on the queenside with 22...♖b2 "where tactics must help", or manoeuvring his queen to the kingside with 22...♕e8 first – both ideas are promising.

22...♕b7!

Unpinning the bishop. The queen will now infiltrate White's position and win material, gaining a tempo by threatening mate – after the rook moved to a2, the c4-knight became pinned.

23 ♗f3 ♕b3

Black is not distracted by complications with 23...♘xh3+, although this is also good. The rest is simple.

24 ♖c2 ♘xd3 25 ♕xd3 ♕xc4 26 ♕xc4

If 26 ♗e2, then 26...♕c5, hitting f2 and a5.

26...♗xc4 27 ♗c6 ♖b3 28 g3 g5 29 ♖e3 ♖a3 30 ♗e4 ♖xa5 31 g4 ♗d5 32 f3 ♗xe4 33 fxe4 ♖a1+ 34 ♔g2 ♖ff1 35 ♖ee2 ♖g1+ 36 ♔h2 ♖h1+ 37 ♔g3 ♖ag1+ 38 ♖g2 ♖e1 39 ♖gf2 ♖e3+ 40 ♔g2 ♖exh3 0-1

In this supplementary game, the most notable feature was the brilliant conception 13...♔h8!, seeking a very effective regrouping of the f6-knight, which due to White's inaccurate play, with the exchange of the dark-squared bishops and the opening of the b- and f-files, became 'a dream come true' after 20...♘g6.

In the last game of this chapter we shall look at an example where regrouping and prophylaxis play their part, smoothly leading us into the next chapter. The game shows yet again that it is not advisable to isolate the elements and act according to just one of them without taking the rest into consideration.

Game 18

Eduardas Rozentalis – Vladimir Kramnik

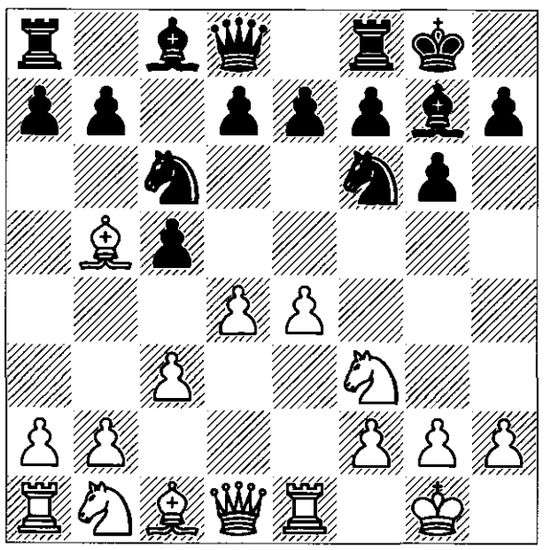
Bundesliga 1993/4

Sicilian Defence, Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 g6 4 0-0 ♗g7 5 c3 ♘f6 6 ♖e1 0-0 7 d4 *(D)*

7...d5

We are in a theoretical position but note that Black didn't play 7...cxd4 automatically, which was in the past the most usual move. One of the

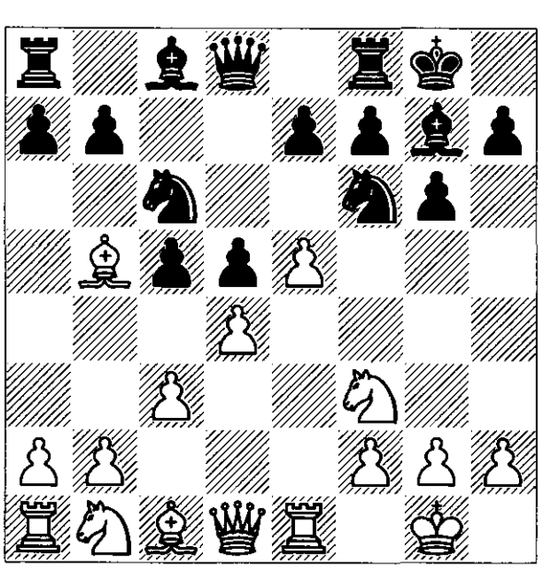


advantages of delaying the exchange ...cxd4 is that the b1-knight has no comfortable square to develop.

The drawback to consider is that White can play dxc5 at some point, but this idea doesn't seem to be particularly effective.

8 e5 *(D)*

The alternative is 8 exd5 ♕xd5, when 9 dxc5 ♕xc5 doesn't offer much, while Black gets a very good game after 9 c4 ♕d6 10 d5?! ♘d4!. Neglecting development and trying to capture material at the expense of compromising the white pieces is also bad: Antunes-Neverov, Candas 1992 had a swift conclusion after 9 ♗xc6? ♕xc6 10 ♖xe7 ♗e6 11 ♘e5 ♕c8 12 c4 cxd4 13 ♗g5 ♘e4 14 ♗f4 ♗xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♕c5 16 ♕xd4 ♖ad8 0-1.

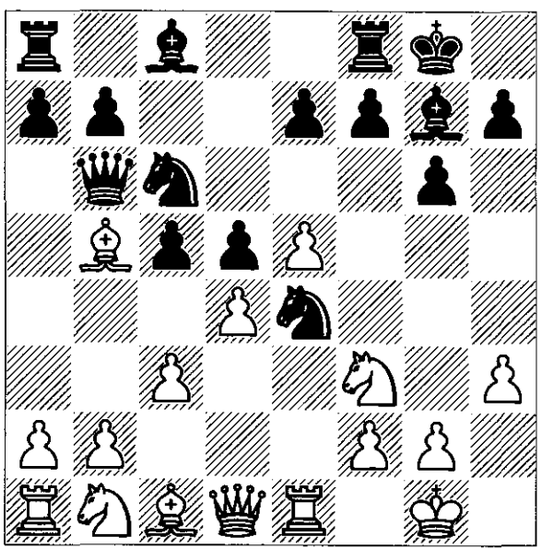


8...♘e4 9 h3?!

Preventing ...♗g4, but wasting a tempo on a hardly useful move.

9 ♗xc6 bxc6 10 ♘bd2 is more often used and considered best.

9...♕b6! *(D)*



A very strong move, developing a piece with tempo and putting pressure on both b2 and d4.

10 ♗a4

If 10 ♗xc6 now, it is possible to retake with 10...♕xc6, and after 11 ♗f4 b6 Kramnik points out that Black is somewhat better. He doesn't have problems either of space or of coordination and the bishop-pair can become important in the future.

10...♗f5

Continuing development and supporting the e4-square. 10...♗e6 is of similar worth. Both moves continue to bring pieces into play, leaving active measures until later.

White must continue with his development: unlike Black, who already has all his pieces in play, his queenside is still 'asleep'. Since the position is a closed one this is not serious but it is something to be solved as soon as possible.

11 ♘a3?!

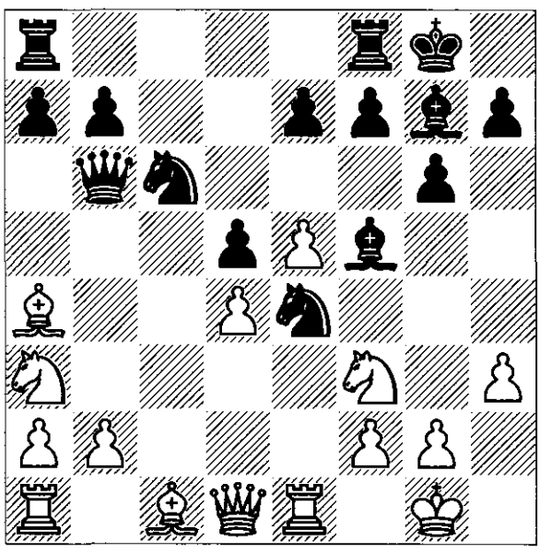
White too continues with his development in the simplest way but the steed on the edge won't have many prospects. The plan is ♘c2-e3 but this entails several tempi that Black will use to sharpen the game, and the absence of the knight will be felt.

The natural 11 ♘bd2? is worse because it neglects the d4-pawn. There follows 11...cxd4, and in order to keep the material balance White has to play 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 14 ♕xd4, when after 14...c5 Black has a distinct

edge: a good centre, the bishop-pair and a weak white pawn on e5.

It was necessary to defend b2 by 11 ♖e2!, with ideas of ♗e3 and ♘bd2, as Kramnik indicates.

11...cxd4 12 cxd4 *(D)*



Black has a free hand to decide the course of action – which is the best way?

12...f6!

It is time to open up the game in the centre and kingside, where the inactivity of White's queenside pieces will be felt the most.

Nevertheless this logical decision must be backed up by careful analysis since, as the reader will have noticed, the a2-g8 diagonal is opened.

13 ♗b3

This is the critical move: it hits d5 and threatens 14 g4 followed by 15 ♖xe4.

13...♖ad8!

This move is based on good calculation. 13...e6 compromises the safety of the f5-bishop but this cannot be exploited immediately. If 14 g4?, Black can answer with 14...♘xf2! followed by 15...fxe5, which gives him a very strong attack. White therefore would answer 13...e6 with 14 ♗e3.

13...♘b4 is also possible, but this abandons the pressure on d4 and makes it easier for White to solve one of his biggest problems, his passive c2-knight: there could follow 14 exf6 exf6?! 15 ♘c2!.

With the text-move, unlike the alternatives just mentioned, another black piece comes into play.

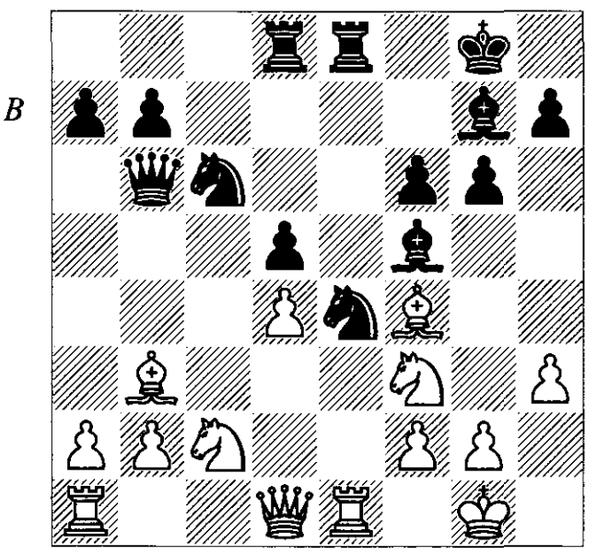
14 exf6

One of the keys of Black's previous move is that 14 g4 is no good: there follows 14...♗e6, when winning material through 15 ♖xe4? dxe4 16 ♗xe6+ ♔h8 becomes a loss for White because if the f3-knight moves, the capture 17...♘xd4 is crushing.

14...exf6 15 ♘c2

The same comment to the previous move is valid for 15 g4.

15...♖fe8 16 ♗f4 *(D)*



16...♗e6!

All the black pieces are active. Before deciding what to do next, it is always useful to ask oneself about the opponent's intentions, in this case 17 ♘e3. After his prophylactic retreat, Black can meet 17 ♘e3 by 17...g5! 18 ♗h2 f5, with a promising initiative.

There are alternatives, such as getting rid of the b3-bishop with 16...♘a5, but they are less strong than the text-move.

17 ♖e2 g5!

The stability of the centre means that Black is not risking anything with this advance – it is also backed up by having his pieces more active.

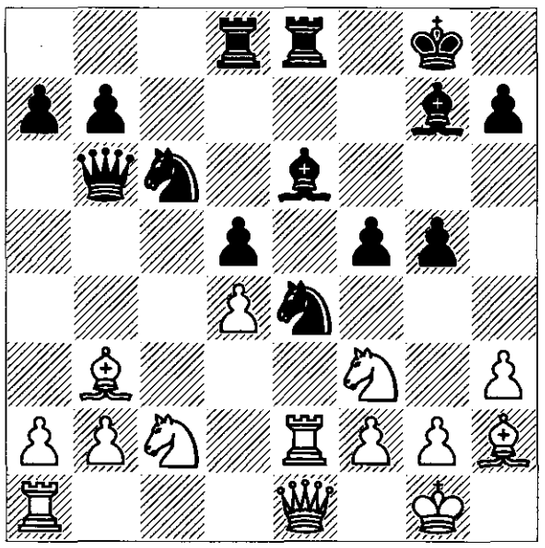
18 ♗h2 f5!

The complement of the previous move. Both ...f4, shutting in the h2-bishop, and ...g4, when the safety of the d4-pawn is in question, have now to be considered.

19 ♕e1 *(D)*

19...♗f7!

"The threat is stronger than its execution." This move lends more strength to the two



aforementioned pawn advances. The pin on the e-file is eliminated and the bishop defends the e8-rook.

Even so, momentarily burying the h2-bishop with 19...f4, suggested by Kramnik, was also attractive. 20 ♘d2 – based on the fact that 20...♘xd4? loses to 21 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 22 ♘xe4 dxe4 23 ♖xe4 – is met by 20...♘xd2!, although it is true that White has better chances than in the game after 21 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 22 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 23 ♗xd5.

Instead, 19...g4? 20 hxg4 fxg4 21 ♘d2 is hasty – the pin on the e-file is an important nuisance. If 21...g3?, there follows simply 22 ♗xg3. The line 21...♘xd4? 22 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 23 ♘xe4 dxe4 24 ♖xe4 doesn't work either.

20 ♖d1

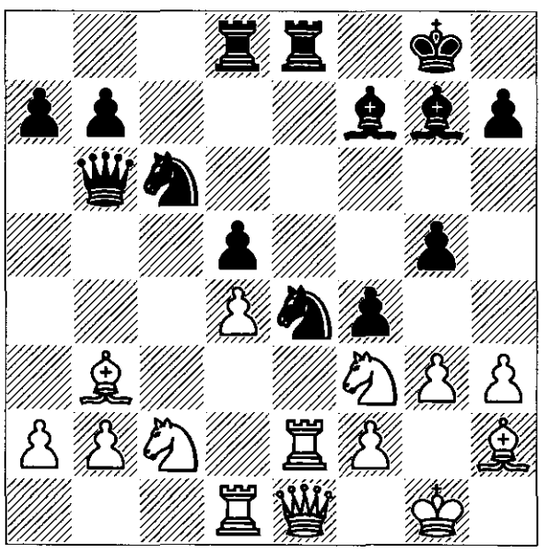
If 20 ♘e3, of course Black doesn't answer with the timid 20...♗e6, but with 20...♘xd4!, and after 21 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 22 ♘xf5, there follows 22...♗c5!, as Kramnik points out, with strong pressure on f2. It is not easy to defend against the threat of 23...♘xf2. Against 23 ♔f1 Kramnik suggests 23...♕f6, renewing the threat of capturing on f2, with advantage, and not the direct 23...♘xf2?? due to the crushing reply 24 ♕c3!, when it is White who wins. Fritz wants to play the more ambitious 23...♕g6, so that, after 24 ♘e3, Black can play 24...♗xe3 25 ♖xe3 d4, keeping the e4-knight defended.

20...f4

Shutting in the h2-bishop. It is true that it can be freed with g3, but the king's position ends up weakened – more lines and diagonal are opened, favouring the more active side.

Instead 20...g4 is not so strong because with 21 ♘h4 White now attacks f5.

21 g3 *(D)*



21...fxg3

The most logical, opening lines at once.

Kramnik also mentions the unpin 21...♔h8, with the threat of ...♗h5. Black would then be able to exploit the g-file too.

A third possibility, with the previous idea of neutralizing the annoying b3-bishop, is 21...♘a5; then 22 ♗a4 is strongly met by 22...fxg3! 23 ♗xg3, after which Black can choose between 23...♗h5 and the simple 23...♖f8.

22 fxg3 ♖f8

Of course – that's what the f-file was opened for.

23 ♔g2?!

This is a natural move – it gets out of the awkward diagonal g1-a7, and overprotects the f3-knight, but as we shall see it places the king on a diagonal as dangerous as the previous one and doesn't solve his insurmountable problem, namely the inactive h2-bishop.

Kramnik commented that 23 g4!, giving a new lease of life to the bishop, was preferable.

23...♘a5!

Once all his own forces were regrouped, the only thing remaining was to neutralize the opponent's strongest piece in order to have a free hand.

24 ♕b4?

This a weakening of White's structure, which will prove impossible to rectify. Better was 24 ♖d3.

Against 24 ♖e3 there are several attractive lines, such as 24...♖c8 or 24...g4!? 25 hxg4 ♗e6. 24...♘c4! is also promising because if White accepts the piece with 25 ♗xc4 dxc4 26 ♖xe4, Black exploits his control of the light squares with 26...♗d5!, when White cannot avoid material losses. Among others 27...♖xf3 28 ♔xf3 ♕f6+ 29 ♔g2 ♕g6 is threatened.

24...♕xb4 25 ♘xb4 ♘xb3 26 axb3 *(D)*

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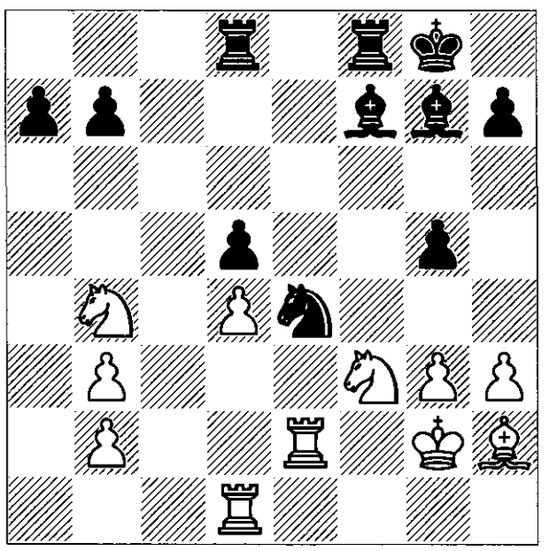

26...♖d6!

Immediately exploiting the weakness of b3 with the threat of ...♖b6.

The temporary sacrifice 26...g4 27 hxg4 ♗e6 was interesting, as was the similar idea 26...♗e6 27 g4 h5. In both cases Black makes the most of the light squares, and the absence of the h2-bishop is still felt.

27 ♘d3 ♖b6 28 b4 ♖c8!

Naturally the open file must be occupied.

29 ♘fe5 ♗e8 30 g4 ♗a4!

One should never let pass the opportunity of worsening the position of an enemy piece. Before playing ...♗b5 Black removes the defender of the d3-knight so he can then threaten ...♗xe5.

In this particular case Black's position is so good that playing 30...♗b5 immediately is also strong.

31 ♖a1 ♗b5 32 ♖d1

The e2-rook must control the second rank and cannot move, and if 32 ♖a3, there follows 32...♖a6, when the problems of the pin of the d3-knight remain.

32...♗f8

Now the threat is 33...♗xb4, against which there is no good defence.

33 ♖de1

As we know, 33 ♖e3 is met by 33...♖c2+.

33...♗d6!

Renewing the threat of capturing on e5, winning the exchange.

34 ♖e3

Already the game is easily decided. If 34 ♖d1, then 34...♗xb4.

34...♖c2+ 35 ♔g1 ♗xd3

The whole shelf crumbles.

36 ♖xd3 ♖xb2 37 ♖c1 ♖6xb4 0-1

There are plenty of lessons to learn from this beautiful positional display by Kramnik. In the first place let's note the break 12...f6!, opening up the game in the sector of the board where Black has the advantage.

"When one piece is badly placed, the whole position is bad" (Tarrasch). Not all developing moves are a priority: after 11 ♘a3?! the knight ended up out of play, which was a very important factor, and to this was added another badly-placed piece, the h2-bishop, which had to be solved with 23 g4! instead of 23 ♔g2?.

Prophylactic thinking was also visible in 16...♗e6!, whereas Steinitz's dictum "The side who has the advantage must attack" was confirmed with 17...g5! and 18...f5!.

Every position, no matter how bad it is, has resources. Therefore it pays not to be overconfident – see 23...♘xf2?? 24 ♕c3! in the note to White's 20th move.

Lastly, let's note that besides calculating complicated lines well, little *zwischenzugs* are useful and necessary to leave the opponent's pieces badly placed – 30...♗a4!.

Exercises for Chapter 4

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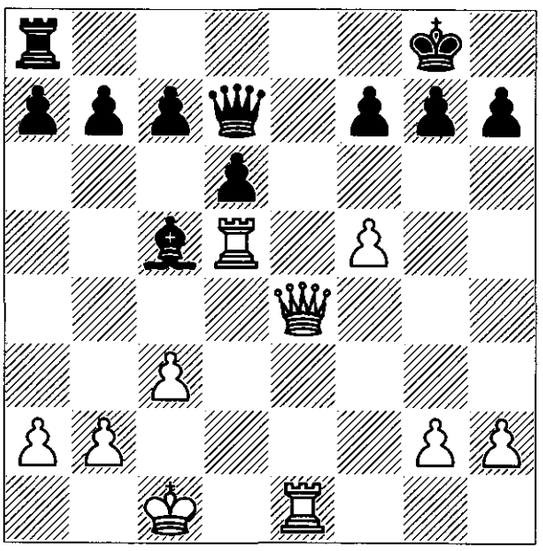

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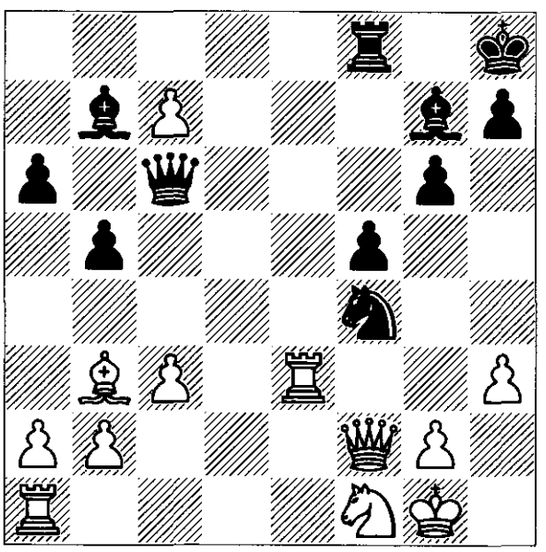

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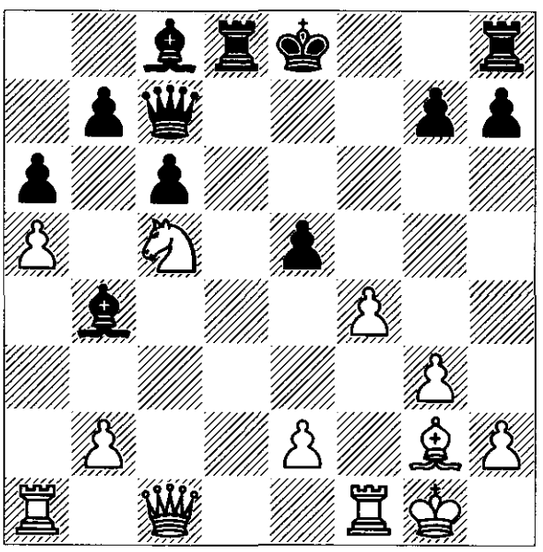

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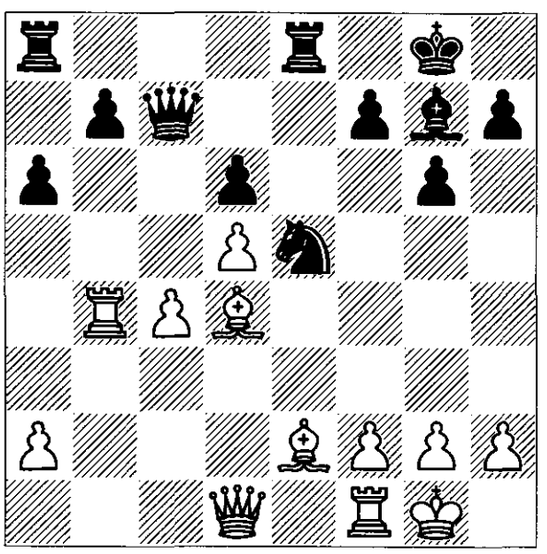

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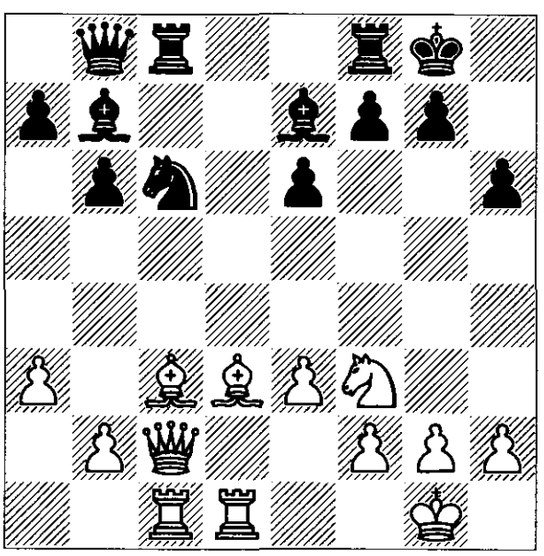

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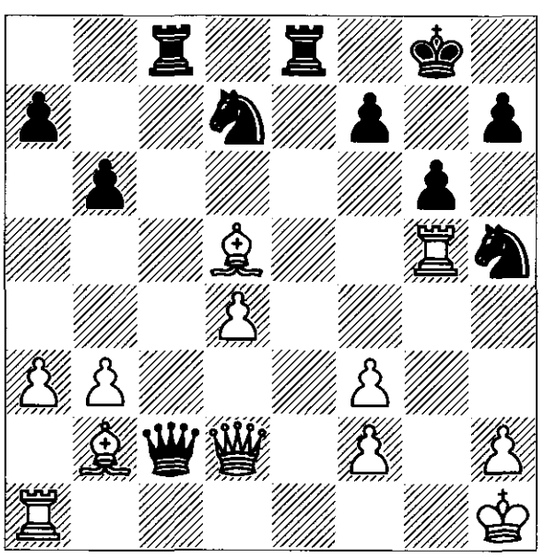

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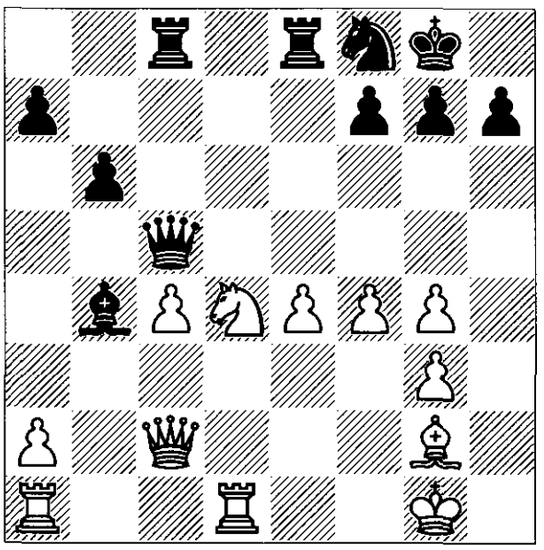

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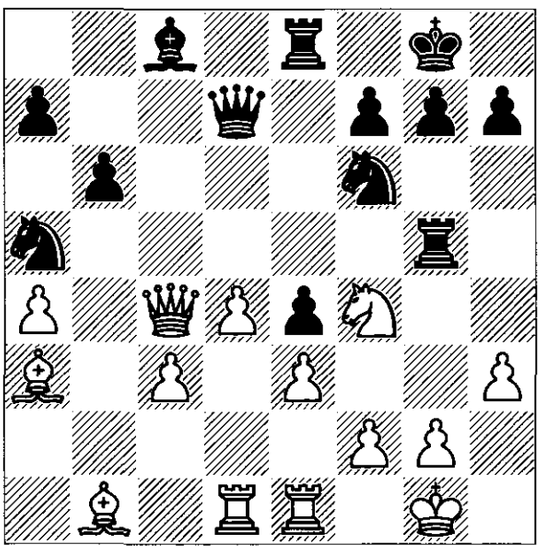

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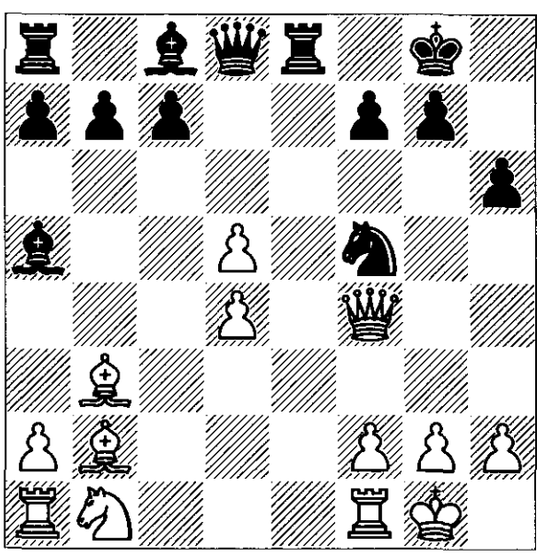

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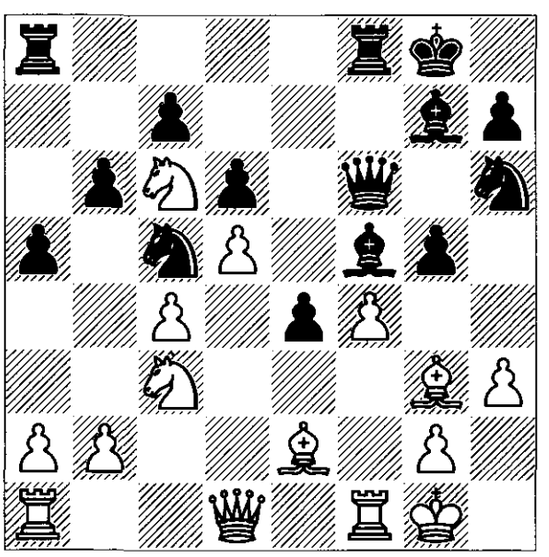

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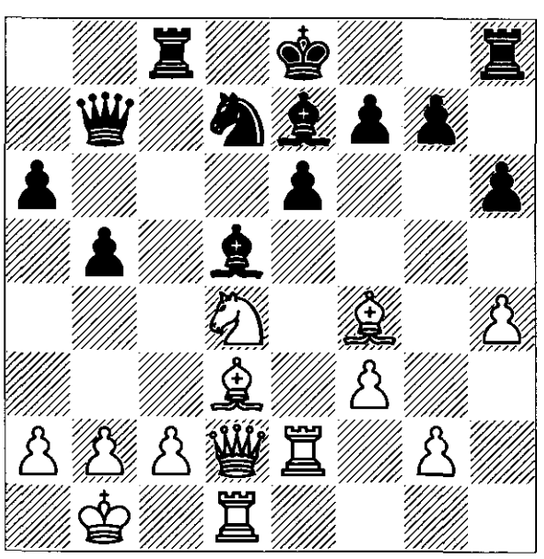

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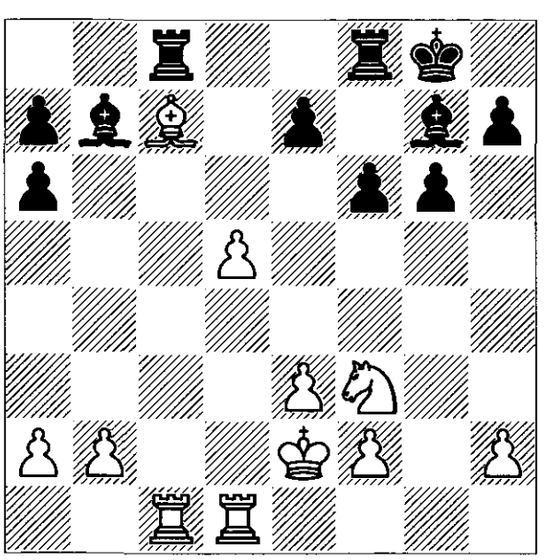

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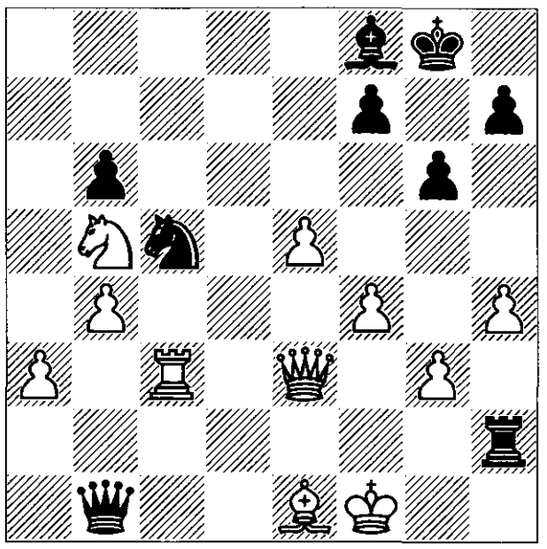


5 Prophylactic Thinking

Chess is a game in which it is not only our plans and ideas that are important, but also those of the opponent. Thwarting or hindering the opponent's plans is just as important as making progress with our own ideas, and doing both things at the same time is the ideal.

This is something that has always been done by the great champions but is often missing from the games of lesser players. Nimzowitsch wrote extensively about 'prophylaxis' but to most chess-players it might have seemed a concept of limited application. The fact that it is such a major component of successful chess decision-making has been emphasized only more recently, and in chess parlance it is called 'prophylactic thinking', a term that has entered common usage thanks in large part to the writings of Mark Dvoretsky. Also the term 'active prophylaxis' has been applied specifically to the idea of advancing one's own attacking ideas through prophylactic thinking.

Asking oneself "What is his threat? What is my opponent planning?" is a very useful guide to finding our best options. We should then take them into account to improve our game combining both ideas.

If you are wondering which master is the best exponent of this theme, the name that quickly comes to mind is that of Anatoly Karpov, although needless to say the great champions of every age were also masters of this element of the game, Bobby Fischer and Tigran Petrosian in particular.

Let's see a practical and simple example by another great champion.

Supplementary Game 19.1

Isaak Lipnitsky – Vasily Smyslov

USSR Ch, Moscow 1951

Nimzo-Indian Defence, Classical Variation

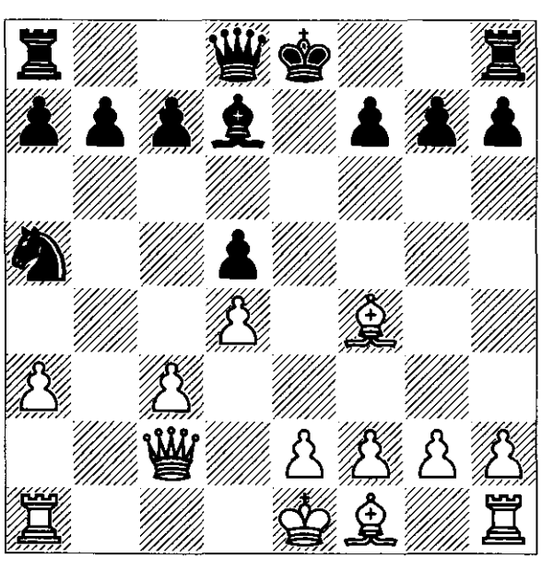
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 ♕c2 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 d5 6 a3 ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3

With this move the game quickly leaves known paths.

7...♘a5!

Smyslov attached great importance to this move, trying to gain a grip on the light squares.

8 ♘e5?! ♘d7 9 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♗f4? *(D)*


B

This move is too ambitious. 11 e3 0-0 leads a more or less balanced position.

What should Black now play? The most obvious would be 11...0-0, bringing the king to safety, but if we ask ourselves what is White's next move, we shall find a stronger idea.

11...♗b5!

After the superficial 11...0-0? White would have justified his previous play with 12 e3 and

13 ♗d3, and his position would even be good. The bishop-pair and Black's badly protected kingside would allow him to be ambitious.

12 h4?!

Playing 12 e3 ♗xf1 13 ♖xf1 ♘c4 would concede Black the advantage because of his strong knight, but this artificial attacking manoeuvre will be comfortably parried. Smyslov suggested as best 12 g3 0-0 13 ♗g2 ♖e8 14 ♗f3, and then castling.

12...0-0 13 ♖b1 ♕d7 14 ♖h3

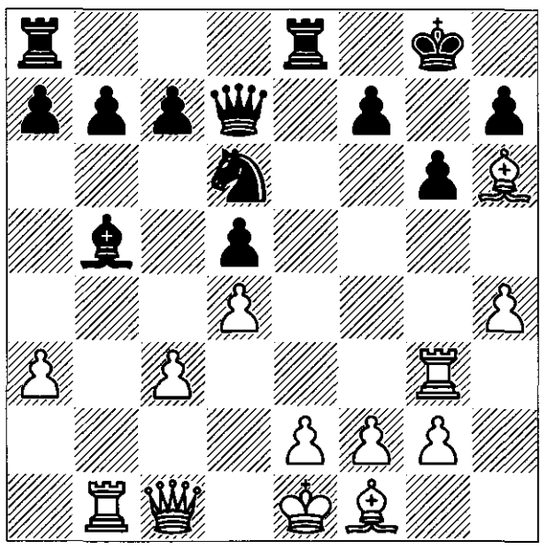
14 ♗xc7?? doesn't work due to 14...♗a4!.

14...♖fe8 15 ♖g3 ♘c4 16 ♗h6 g6 17 ♕c1 ♘d6! *(D)*

The attack has been repelled and as soon as Black brings more pieces into play, his counter-attack will be decisive.

18 ♕f4 ♗a6

Also good was 18...♘f5 19 ♖xb5 ♖e4! (but not 19...♘xg3? 20 fxg3 ♕xb5 21 ♕f6 ♕b1+ 22 ♔d2 {22 ♔f2? loses to 22...♕f5+} 22...♕b2+, which only draws) 20 ♖xb7 ♖xf4 21 ♗xf4 ♘xg3.



19 e3 ♘f5! 20 ♗xa6 bxa6 21 ♖b7? ♖ab8! 22 ♖xc7 ♖b1+ 23 ♔e2 ♕a4 0-1

Game 19, which we shall be examining shortly, is well-known and relatively simple. However, at first sight, without knowing the antecedents of the position, it can seem surprising. Therefore we shall first take a look at another short game that can help us understand it better.

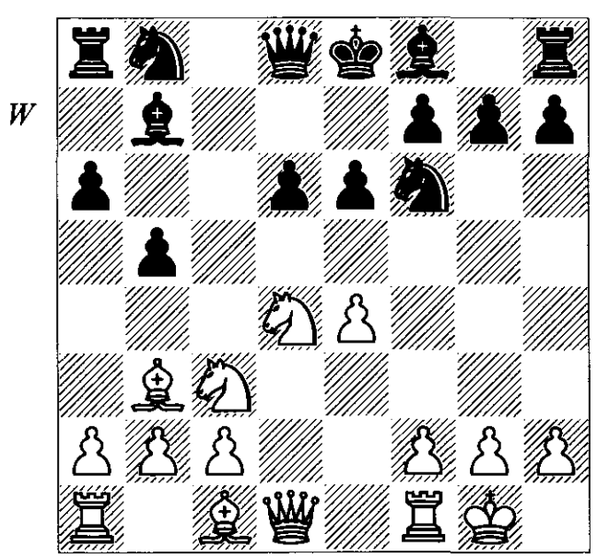
Supplementary Game 19.2

Bobby Fischer – Olicio Gadia

Mar del Plata 1960

Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗c4 e6 7 ♗b3 b5 8 0-0 ♗b7 *(D)*



9 f4

Ten years after this game, in Fischer-Rubinetti, Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970, White preferred 9 ♗g5 and culminated with an instructive model of exploitation of the black king in the centre, with the thematic piece sacrifice on d5.

9...♘c6 10 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 11 f5!

White improves the prospects of the passive b3-bishop and effectively weakens the d5-square. Black usually compensates with other advantages, but here he won't manage to do that.

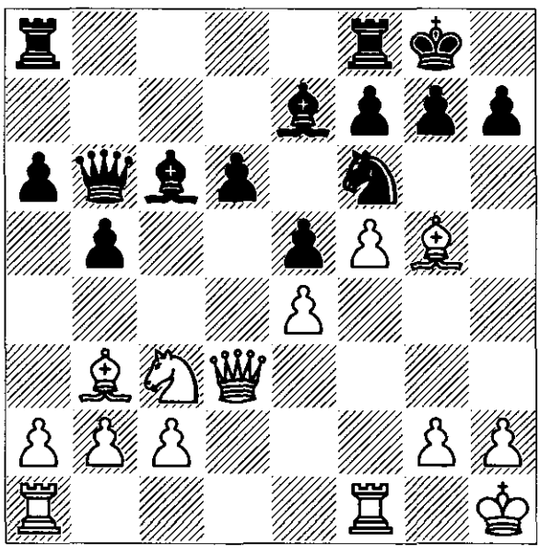
11...e5 12 ♕d3 ♗e7?!

Too cooperative. Better was 12...b4 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 15 ♕xd5 ♕b6+, followed by 16...♖c8, deviating from the course of the game.

13 ♗g5!

As a complement to the weakening of d5, this move puts pressure on one of the defenders.

13...♕b6+ 14 ♔h1 0-0 *(D)*



White now achieves the optimal strategic outcome for this structure: a powerful knight on d5 against a bad dark-squared bishop.

15 ♗xf6!

First one of the defenders of d5 is eliminated.

15...♗xf6 16 ♗d5!

And now another defender is exchanged. Let's note that generally Black tries to avoid this sort of passive position by all means possible. The light-squared bishops can but rarely be exchanged, and generally an earlier ...b4 by Black forces ♘d5. White ends up with a strong d5-bishop, but this is less strong than a knight on this square.

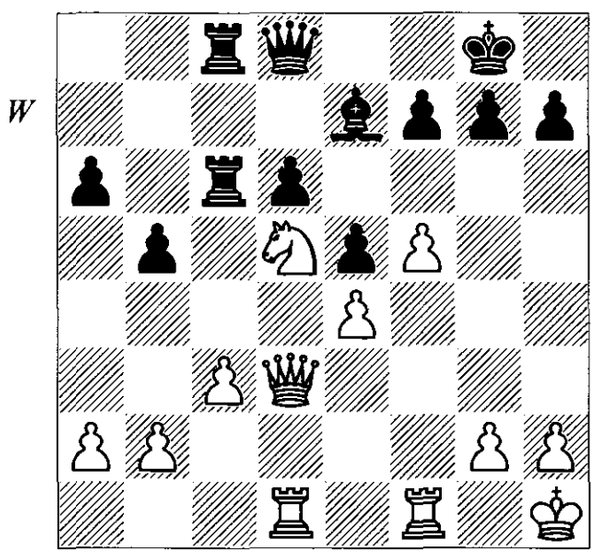
16...♖ac8 17 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 18 ♖ad1!

Not 18 ♘d5? at once because there follows 18...♕d4! and Black's typical pressure along the c-file is effective.

18...♖fc8 19 ♘d5 ♕d8

Now 19...♕d4?? loses to 20 ♘xf6+ gxf6 21 ♕g3+.

20 c3 ♗e7 *(D)*



What should White play now? An attempt to attack on the kingside would seem natural. The strong d5-knight, however, can be considered as only one advantage. White creates a second weakness with a less-than-obvious move.

21 ♖a1!

After the break on a4 the black queenside will be weakened.

21...f6 22 a4

Black made now a crass error which saved him from a painful defensive task, but he had few chances of salvation anyway.

22...♖b8?? 23 ♘xe7+ 1-0

We now move on to our main game, in which Fischer handles the black pieces and provides a model example of how to counter White's ideas.

Game 19

Robert Byrne – Bobby Fischer

Sousse Interzonal 1967

Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗c4 e6 7 ♗b3 b5 8 f4

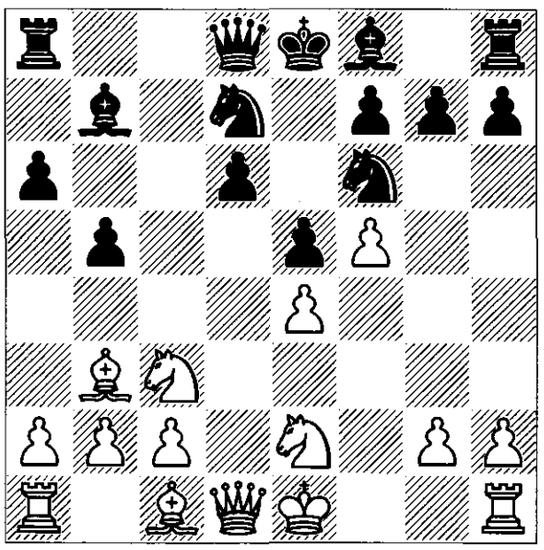
The modern treatment is to refrain from pushing the f-pawn and play with the pieces instead by 8 ♕f3, seeking a quick ♕g3.

8...♗b7 9 f5 e5 10 ♘de2 ♘bd7 *(D)*

11 ♗g5

White plays in a similar way to Fischer's plan, but the position is not so favourable. There isn't the possibility of exchanging knights by ♘xc6,

W



as in Fischer-Gadia, and in order to exchange the knights White must resort to a manoeuvre which costs some tempi.

11...♗e7 12 ♘g3

In this position, playing White, Fischer would abandon the idea of reaching the ideal position, probably because he already knew that he couldn't carry it out in good circumstances. In Fischer-Zuckerman, USA Ch, New York 1965/6 he opted for 12 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 13 ♕d3, and although he ended up winning the game this was not because of the opening, which is now equal according to his own evaluation.

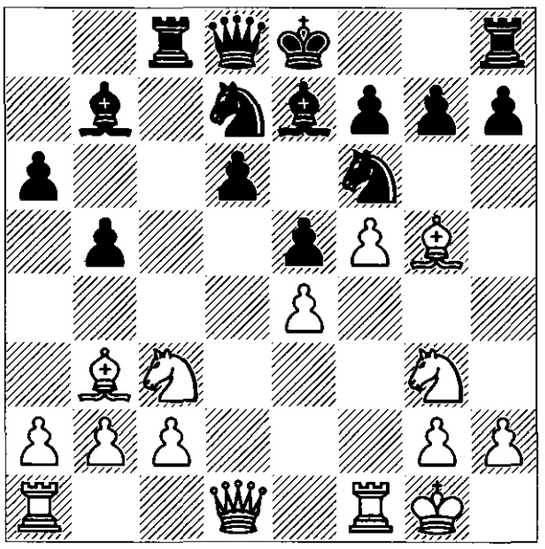
12...♖c8!

It is important not to play mechanically. If 12...0-0, White can carry out his plan, playing 13 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 14 ♘h5 ♘xh5 15 ♕xh5 ♖c8 16 ♗d5 ♗xd5 17 ♘xd5 ♖xc2, reaching the ideal position at the cost of a pawn. Black's position is defensible but awkward, and in Padevsky-Minić, Polanica Zdroj 1963 his situation soon deteriorated irreparably: 18 0-0 ♗f6 19 b3 h6 20 ♖fc1 ♖xc1+ 21 ♖xc1 ♗g5 22 ♖c7 ♗e3+ 23 ♔f1 b4? 24 ♖c8 ♕xc8 25 ♘e7+ ♔h8 26 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 27 ♕xf7 ♖c1+ 28 ♔e2 ♗f4 29 g3 ♗g5 30 ♕f8+ ♔h7 31 ♕xd6 ♖c2+ 32 ♔f3 ♖xa2 33 ♕xe5 1-0.

13 0-0?! *(D)*

With the idea of continuing with ♗xf6 and ♘h5. He could have tried to reach this position sooner by 13 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 14 ♘h5, but Black could justify his previous move and exploit White's neglect of the vital point e4 with the typical sacrifice 14...♖xc3!, with very good play after 15 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16 bxc3 ♗xe4, when the threat of 17...♗h4+ prevents White from regaining control of the d5-square, at least not for free.

B



13...h5!!

An amazing move at first sight – Black compromises his kingside without any possibility of turning back, but the gains are far greater. He completely rules out White's one-dimensional plan and so leaves the white pieces badly placed.

This is the reason Black kept delaying castling: the black king won't have any problems in the centre. White must now face a strong counterattack with the badly-placed g3-knight turned into a tactical weakness. The threat is 14...h4, capturing the vital central e4-pawn.

14 h4

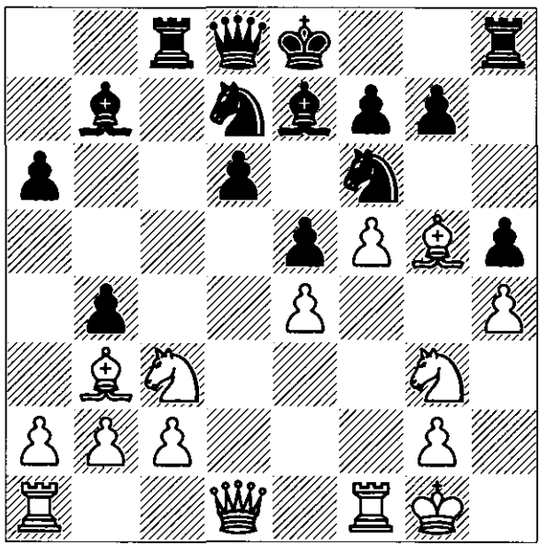
This is an important concession but the alternatives, such as 14 ♗xf6 ♘xf6, are no better. After 15 ♕d3, Black can destroy the white centre and increase the strength of the b7-bishop by means of the h-pawn with 15...♖xc3! 16 ♕xc3 ♕b6+ 17 ♔h1 h4 18 ♘e2 h3 19 ♘g3 hxg2+ 20 ♔xg2 ♘xe4. Jumping to d5 doesn't diminish the strength of the h-pawn, which Black uses as a battering-ram; for instance, 15 ♘d5 h4 16 ♘xf6+ gxf6 17 ♘h5 ♕b6+ 18 ♖f2 ♗xe4 doesn't resist.

14...b4! *(D)*

What was before bad because it forced the jump to d5, now, with the inclusion of 13...h5 and 14 h4, favours Black due to the weakness of the h4-pawn.

15 ♗xf6

Also insufficient is 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♗xg5 17 hxg5 ♗xd5 18 ♕xd5 h4, followed by



19...♕xg5, and it is Black who has the better pieces and the attack.

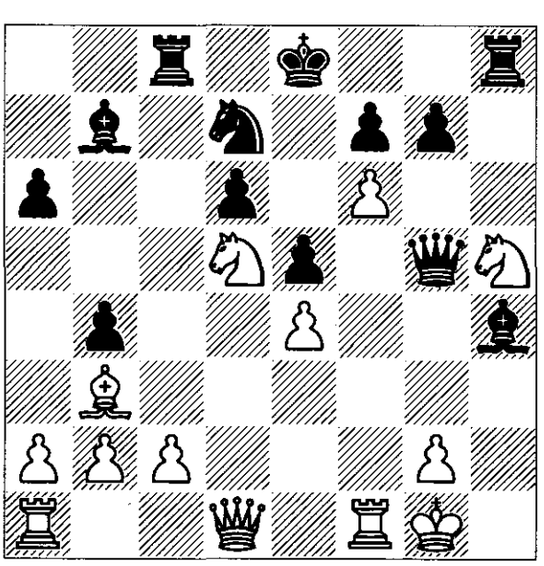
15...♗xf6

15...♘xf6 is also good. White would seek some compensation by placing a knight on e4 after, for instance, 16 ♘d5 ♗xd5 (or 16...♘xd5 17 exd5 ♗xh4 18 ♘e4) 17 exd5 ♘g4 18 ♕f3 ♗xh4 19 ♘e4.

16 ♘d5 ♗xh4 17 ♘xh5

In for a penny, in for a pound – to avoid ending up a pawn down, White accepts the opening of the h-file, which certainly doesn't promise a quiet middlegame for his king. If 17 f6, there would follow 17...g6 (not 17...♗xg3?? 18 fxg7 ♖g8 19 ♕xh5, winning) 18 ♕f3 ♗g5!, followed by 19...h4, driving the g3-knight away from e4, and ...♗xd5, in order to capture the annoying f6-pawn afterwards.

17...♕g5 18 f6 *(D)*



18...g6

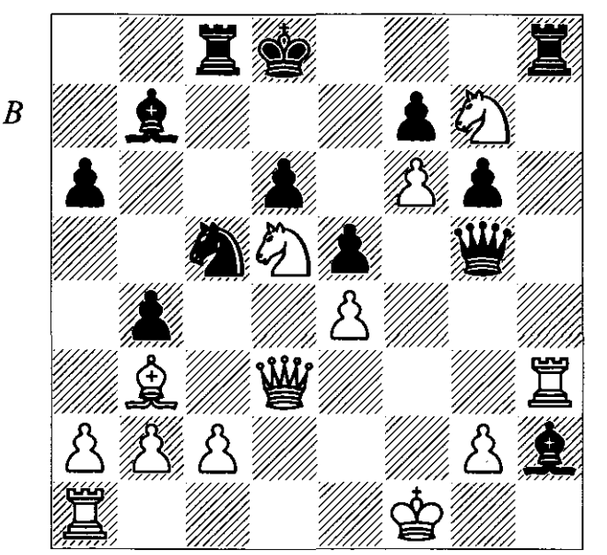
Trying to be more forceful than with the also good 18...♖xh5 19 ♖f5, when Black keeps a clear advantage after 19...♗f2+! 20 ♔xf2 ♕h4+ 21 ♔g1 ♕h2+ 22 ♔f2 ♖xf5+ 23 exf5 ♘xf6 24 ♘xf6+ gxf6 25 ♕g4 ♔e7.

Black wants to win through attack, exploiting the open h-file and the fact that the g7-knight will remain out of play.

19 ♘g7+ ♔d8 20 ♖f3 ♗g3

Threatening 21...♕h4. To prevent this, White attacks the g3-bishop but this gives Black time for his knight to enter the game.

21 ♕d3 ♗h2+ 22 ♔f1 ♘c5 23 ♖h3 *(D)*



23...♖h4!

Again Black plays the most simple move, not going for complications, although these are good after 23...♘xd3 24 ♖xh8+ ♔d7; e.g., 25 ♗a4+ ♗c6 26 ♘b6+ ♔c7 27 ♖xc8+ ♔xb6 28 ♖xc6+ ♔a5 29 cxd3 ♕e3!.

24 ♕f3

Now follows a general simplification after which Black will end up several pawns ahead, and with his king safe, whereas the g7-knight will still be surrounded and the white king totally exposed.

24...♘xb3 25 axb3 ♖xh3 26 ♕xh3 ♗xd5 27 exd5 ♕xf6+ 28 ♔e1 ♕f4 0-1

Rarely has a prophylactic move like 13...h5!! had such a deadly effect on the enemy position. White ended up with several pieces badly placed. In order to achieve this it was important to have a clear notion of which of White's ideas had to be stopped, namely the one that reached

the sort of position of Fischer-Gadia in Supplementary Game 19.2, or even Padevsky-Minić quoted on Black's 12th move. The next step was to prepare the blow by not castling prematurely, and punish the neglect of e4 with 12...♖c8!, keeping the sacrifice ...♖xc3 in reserve.

In several of the previous examples we saw it was not enough to find the best plan the position offers – to carry out a good general idea at the wrong time, not considering the opponent's ideas, can be the equivalent of playing a bad plan.

Game 20

Boris Gulko – Predrag Nikolić

World Cup, Reykjavik 1991

Réti Opening

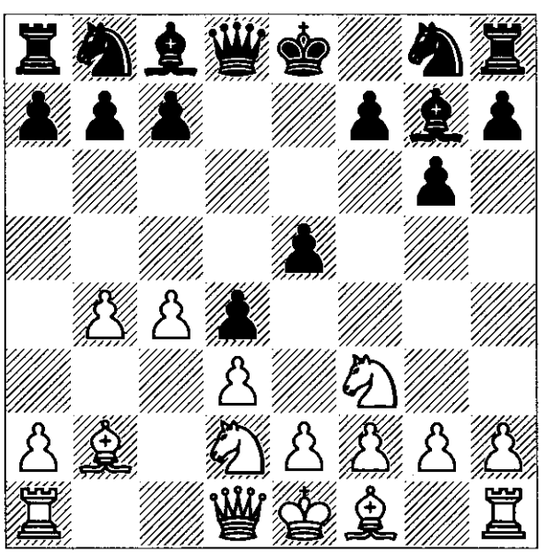
1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 d4 3 b4 g6 4 ♗b2

A sort of prophylactic thinking as early as move 4, not because Black threatens or plans something dangerous or a substantial improvement of his game, but rather to get him out of familiar and comfortable territory.

We are in a relatively unusual position, a somewhat atypical Benoni with reversed colours and with b4 already played. This means that the plans must be adapted to the new structure.

White develops his c1-bishop before the kingside in order to avoid the line 4 g3 ♗g7 5 d3 e5 6 ♗g2 ♘e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘bd2 a5 9 b5 c5!?, which Nikolić had played several times with success. It is more a matter of taste than an unquestionable evaluation. Larsen-Chandler, Hastings 1987/8 went 10 bxc6 ♘exc6 11 ♗a3 ♘b4 12 ♕b3! ♘8a6 (if 12...♕e7, White was planning 13 ♘e1 and 14 ♘c2) 13 ♗xb4 axb4 14 a3 bxa3 15 ♕xa3 ♖e8 16 ♖fb1 (Larsen commented that White already has a clear advantage) 16...f5 17 ♘e1 ♘c7 18 ♗d5+ ♔h8 19 ♕xa8! ♘xa8 20 ♖xa8 ♗h6 21 ♘df3 ♕e7 22 ♗xb7!, and the compensation for the queen was more than enough. White's victory, accomplished through an attack when the knights entered the game, was never in question.

4...♗g7 5 d3 e5 6 ♘bd2 *(D)*



What should Black play? Nothing is more natural than playing 6...♘e7 and 7...0-0, and then deciding what to do on the queenside. Or is there any hurry?

6...a5!

If Black wants to play a set-up similar to the one we saw in Larsen-Chandler, he must play this move now, for if 6...♘e7 there would follow 7 ♘b3.

In Supplementary Game 20.1, Korchnoi-Timman, Linares 1985, we shall see exemplary play by White after a somewhat different opening.

7 a3

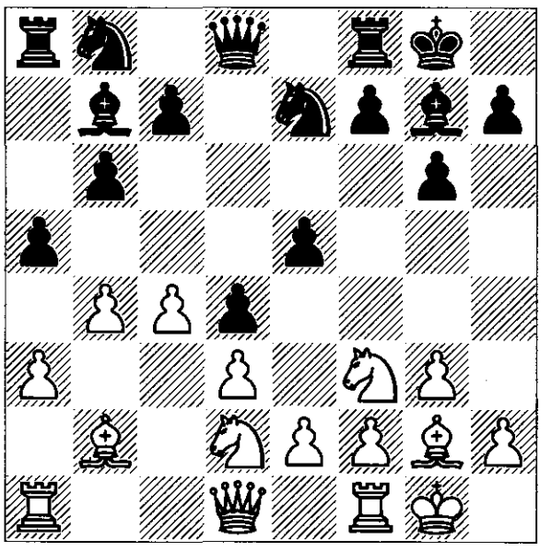
The fact that he has played the bishop to b2, protecting the a1-rook, allows White to keep the tension on the queenside without the need to play b5.

7...♘e7 8 g3 b6

Black is attempting to challenge the g2-bishop's grip on the long diagonal, which Timman also did in the game which we shall see later on.

Nikolić didn't play 8...c5 because of fears of 9 bxc5! ♘a6 10 a4 ♘xc5 11 ♗a3, when he thinks that the active a3-bishop gives White the advantage.

9 ♗g2 ♗b7 10 0-0 0-0 *(D)*



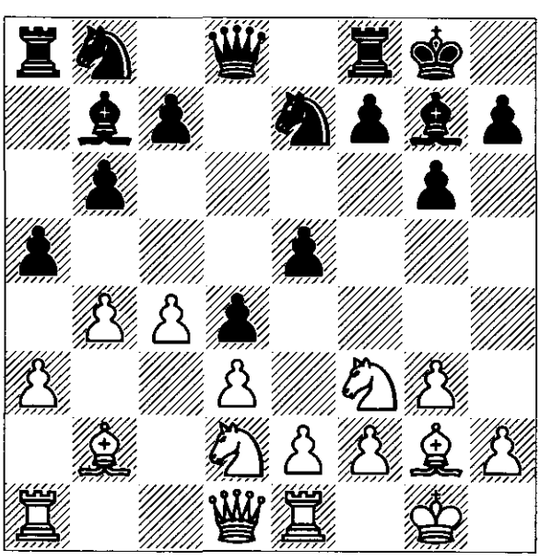
What plans does White have at his disposal?

In a Benoni structure with b4 already played, a logical idea would be to give more life to the passive b2-bishop, by preparing e3. What is the best way to proceed?

11 ♖e1?! *(D)*

This is the direct way but it fails precisely because it doesn't consider what Black can play, what his plan is, and whether he can prevent or hinder the idea of a quick e3 by White.

Another important question to elucidate is who benefits from the tension on the a-file. Once it is clear that Black plans to play ...c5, stopping the b2-bishop from coming to life, and that closing the a-file is not to White's detriment, the best move seems to be 11 ♕b3!, stopping 11...c5? due to 12 bxc5!. After 11...a4 12 ♕c2 c5 White can indeed begin his plan of playing e3 without any distractions by 13 ♖fe1 ♕c7 (not 13...♘d7? because of 14 ♘xe5, winning a pawn) 14 e3.

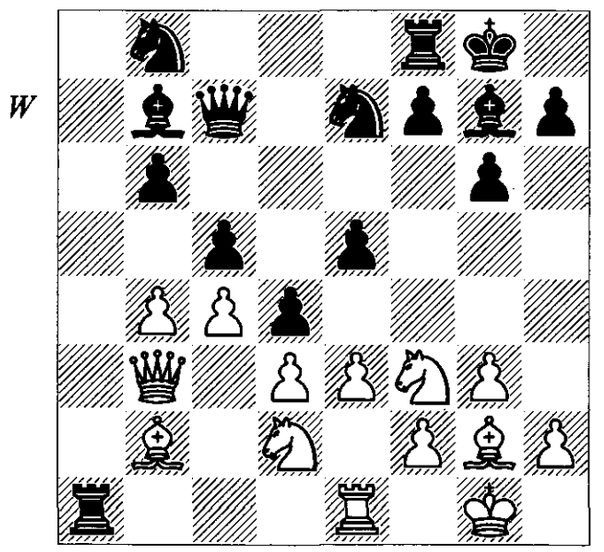


11...c5 12 ♕b3

Before playing e3 it is necessary to defend the d3-pawn. In passing, White wins a tempo with the potential attack on the b7-bishop.

After 12 e3?! axb4 13 axb4 ♖xa1 14 ♕xa1 dxe3 15 ♖xe3 there follows 15...♘f5 16 ♖e1 cxb4 17 ♗xe5 ♕xd3, and there doesn't seem to be enough compensation for the pawn.

12...♕c7 13 e3 axb4 14 axb4 ♖xa1 *(D)*



With which piece should White recapture?

15 ♖xa1?

Occupying the open file seems reasonable, but yet again White fails to consider what Black was going to play next.

Better was 15 ♗xa1 dxe3 16 ♖xe3, when 16...f6 gives Black an acceptable game. The game continuation is less promising.

15...dxe3!

In 'normal' circumstances this exchange would reinforce White's centre, but this is no standard position: the queenside has opened up and after the exchanges the white centre will prove weak.

As Nikolić indicated, "White is not strong enough to play actively on the queenside as well."

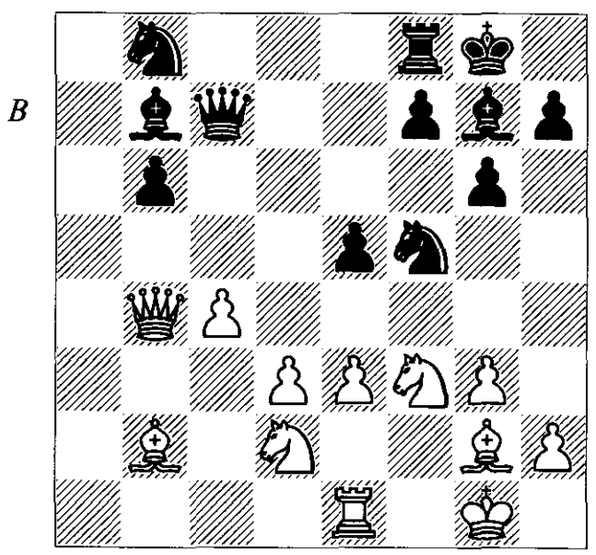
16 fxe3 cxb4 17 ♕xb4

White cannot become active in the centre with 17 d4. After 17...exd4 18 exd4 Black has several ways of laying siege to the white centre, with 18...♗xf3 19 ♘xf3 ♘bc6, followed by ...♖d8, for instance. Also worth considering is 18...♘a6, while in his notes for *Informator 52*, Gulko suggested 18...♘f5 19 ♖e1 ♗xf3! 20

♘xf3 ♘c6 21 d5 ♘a5, with a clear plus for Black.

17...♘f5 18 ♖e1 *(D)*

A sad acknowledgement of the fact that the possible activity on the queenside was but a mirage.



18...♘a6 19 ♕c3

The queen is precariously placed on the same diagonal as the g7-bishop, but after 19 ♕a3 ♘c5 Black would have the option ...♖a8 with gain of time.

19...♘c5!

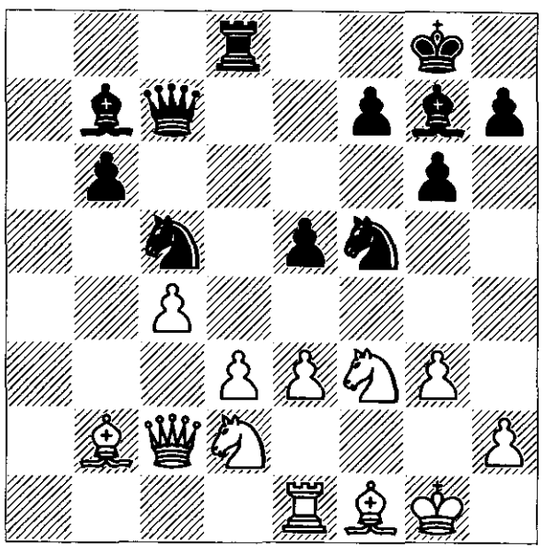
Another piece comes into play and the weaknesses of d3 and e3 start to tell.

Black wants more than what he would get after 19...e4 20 ♘d4 ♖d8, when in the event of 21 ♘xe4 ♘xd4 (21...♗xe4!) 22 exd4 Black must play 22...♗xe4, with advantage, but not 22...♗xd4+?? 23 ♕xd4 ♖xd4 24 ♘f6+!, and White wins.

20 ♕c2 ♖d8 21 ♗f1 *(D)*

There's nothing better. The tactical complications ensuing from 21 d4?! lead to Black's advantage after 21...exd4 22 exd4, when both 22...♘e6 23 d5 ♗xd5 24 ♗xg7 ♘exg7 and the long but crushing line 22...♘xd4 23 ♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 24 ♘xd4 ♗xg2 25 ♔xg2 ♖xd4 26 ♖e8+ ♔g7 27 ♕c3 ♕c6+ 28 ♘e4? ♘xe4 29 ♕xd4+ ♘f6+ work well for Black.

Closing the position with 21 e4, trying to remain with just one weakness on d3, looked reasonable but the weaknesses in the centre and kingside allow 21...♘xd3! 22 exf5 ♕c5+. Now if 23 ♔h1, Black has a smothered mate, and if 23 ♗d4, there follows 23...♘xe1, winning material.



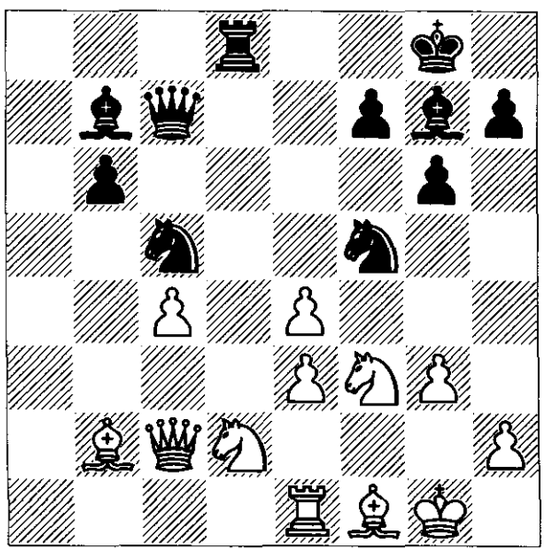
21...e4!

All the black pieces are active and centralized, which together with White's passive pieces and his weakened king allows Black to make the most of the opening of the position.

The increase in activity of the black queen, acting now against the white king, will be relevant.

22 dxe4?! *(D)*

It is not possible to avoid damage to the pawn-structure but it was better to exchange some of Black's active pieces for White's passive ones with 22 ♘xe4, as Nikolić indicated. After 22...♗xb2 23 ♕xb2 ♘xe4 24 dxe4 ♗xe4, he could still keep holding on in an inferior position by 25 ♕f2! (but not 25 ♗g2?, which loses to the same combination as in the game: 25...♘xg3! 26 hxg3 ♗xf3 27 ♗xf3 ♕xg3+).



22...♘xg3! 23 ♗xg7

If 23 hxg3, Black wins after 23...♕xg3+ 24 ♗g2 ♘d3 25 ♖b1 ♘xb2 26 ♖xb2 ♗xb2 27 ♕xb2 ♗xe4.

23...♘xf1 24 ♗a1

The *zwischenzug* 24 ♗e5 is met by 24...♘xd2! 25 ♗xc7 ♘xf3+ 26 ♔f1 ♖d2 27 ♕b1 ♘xe4, when the white king is quickly mated.

24...♘xh2!

"Finally, the g3-square is free for the black queen." (Nikolić).

25 ♘xh2 ♕g3+ 26 ♔f1 ♕xh2 27 ♕c3 f6

The pawn is untouchable due to 28...♖f8. Now the d2-knight is threatened, and if it moves away, 28...♘xe4 wins.

0-1

Prophylactic thinking was present at several stages during the game. We can say without exaggeration that not using this concept adequately was the main cause for White's defeat.

The move 11 ♖e1?!, instead of 11 ♕b3!, was hasty and became a loss of time after the recapture 15 ♖xa1?, abandoning the centre and without evaluating adequately the opening of the position. White's game became very sensitive, especially after his weaknesses were exposed by the sequence 15...dxe3!, 19...♘c5! and 21...e4!.

With precise and elegant play Black exploited one last error, 22 dxe4?!, with the blows 22...♘xg3! and 24...♘xh2!.

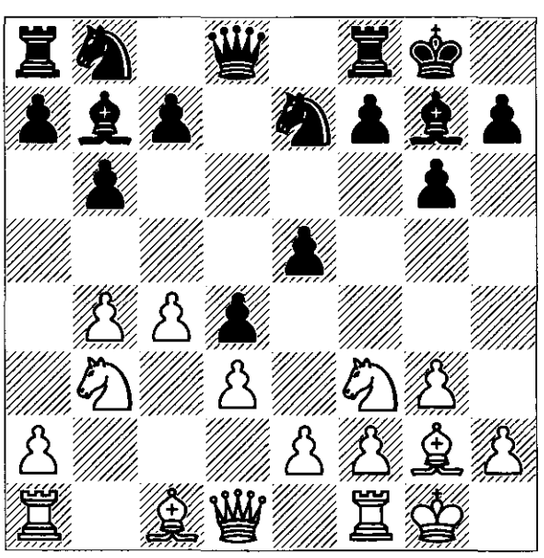
Supplementary Game 20.1

Viktor Korchnoi – Jan Timman

Linares 1985

Réti Opening

1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 d4 3 b4 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 d3 b6 6 ♗g2 ♗b7 7 0-0 e5 8 ♘bd2 ♘e7 9 ♘b3 0-0 *(D)*



10 a4!

White exploits Black's early ...b6 to create tension on the a-file.

10...♘d7 11 a5 ♖b8?!

Abandoning the a-file is a concession. 11...a6 was worth considering, anticipating the threat of 12 a6.

12 axb6 axb6 13 ♖a7

There are already combinative themes based on ♖xb7; for instance, after 13...♘f5?.

13...♗a8?! 14 ♗g5

Trying to weaken Black's structure with the threat of 15 ♗xe7, winning a pawn.

14...f6 15 ♗d2 h6? 16 ♕c2

The f1-rook is ready to increase the pressure on the open file.

16...f5?!

Persisting with the bad idea of kingside counterplay. After 16...♘c6 17 ♖a4 the extra possibility of b5 and ♗b4 would be latent – this would activate the d2-bishop with tempo.

17 ♖fa1

The pressure is very strong. White threatens 18 ♘xe5 ♗xg2 19 ♘xd7, or similar ideas with 18 ♘g5. White may already be winning.

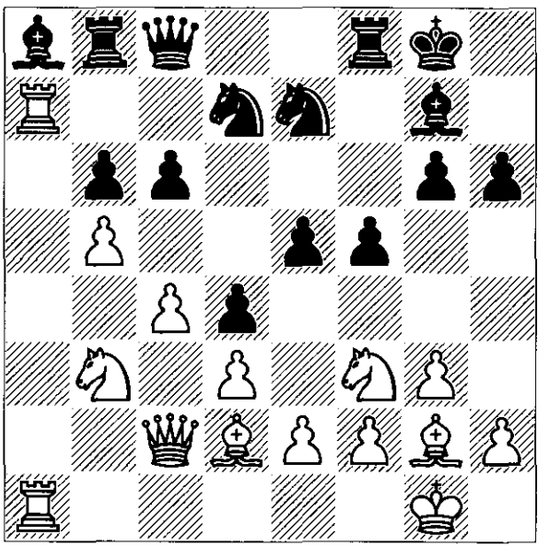
17...c6 18 b5! ♕c8 *(D)*

If 18...c5 or 18...cxb5, there follows 19 ♘fxd4!.

How should White manoeuvre so as to increase the pressure on Black's position?

19 ♕c1!

W



The most forceful continuation is a multi-purpose move – White's most immediate threat is against h6.

19...♔h7 20 ♕a3!

And the other purpose was this – hitting the e7-knight, increasing the pressure on the open file, and with ideas of infiltrating through d6. The game ends quickly.

20...♖e8

If 20...c5, the blow 21 ♘xe5 would again exploit White's dynamic superiority.

21 ♕d6 ♗b7 22 ♘h4! c5 23 ♗c6! ♘f6 24 ♗xe8 ♕xe8 25 ♕xb6 ♘c8 26 ♕c7! ♘xa7 27 ♖xa7 1-0

In the following example, prophylactic thinking is applied right from the first stages of the game, not in order to obtain any immediate advantage but rather to hinder the opponent's plans. The possibility of changing the structure is something that had to be evaluated often too.

Game 21

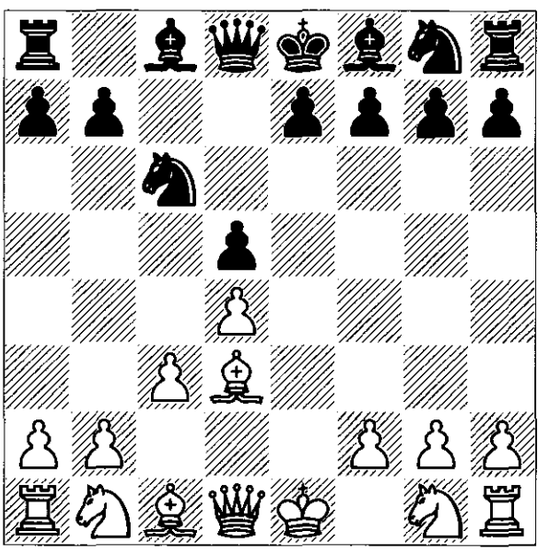
Miguel Illescas – Viswanathan Anand

Linares 1994

Caro-Kann Defence, Exchange Variation

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♗d3 ♘c6 5 c3 *(D)*

B



We are in a known theoretical position, albeit in a minor variation, but even so let's ask ourselves how Black should continue his development.

There are several possibilities: an ambitious idea, although a bit committal, is 5...g6. It can be used to carry on developing with ...♗g7 and also to offer the exchange of the presumably 'bad' bishop with ...♗f5, at the cost of doubling the pawns. The natural 5...♘f6 is possible too. On the other hand we see that Black cannot play 5...♗f5. Nevertheless, 5...e6? would be an important concession, going against the main idea of the Caro-Kann Defence – Black shouldn't reconcile himself to leaving the c8-bishop inside the pawn-chain.

All these considerations are about deciding how to develop one's own pieces. Anand chose a different idea.

5...♕c7!

It is important to take into account how to push ahead with one's own plans, as expressed in the previous note, but hindering the opponent's intentions, that is, prophylactic thinking, is needed too.

White was looking to play 6 ♗f4, controlling the h2-b8 diagonal, and Black prevents it with a useful move. This is important because thwarting the opponent's plans by making moves that

worsen our position is obviously not to be recommended.

6 ♗g5 ♘f6 7 ♘d2

Another type of structure, not necessarily better, is reached after 7 ♗xf6 gxf6.

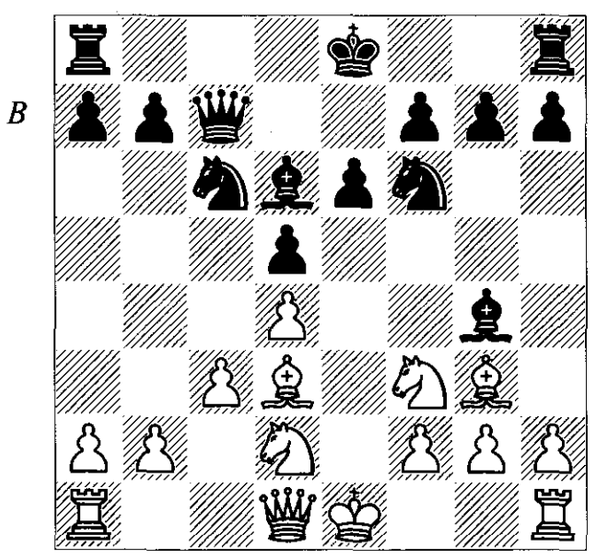
7...♗g4

As we have already commented, this is one of the basic ideas of the defence adopted – to develop the bishop outside the pawn-chain.

8 ♘gf3 e6 9 ♗h4

The white bishop is heading to the h2-b8 diagonal either to control it or to try to exchange Black's theoretically better bishop – better because it controls the squares of the opposite colour from the central pawns.

9...♗d6 10 ♗g3 *(D)*



Again we have several options, such as the simple 10...0-0, and also to try to exploit the control of the f4-square with 10...♘h5 and ...♘f4 at the appropriate time. Black chooses a third possibility.

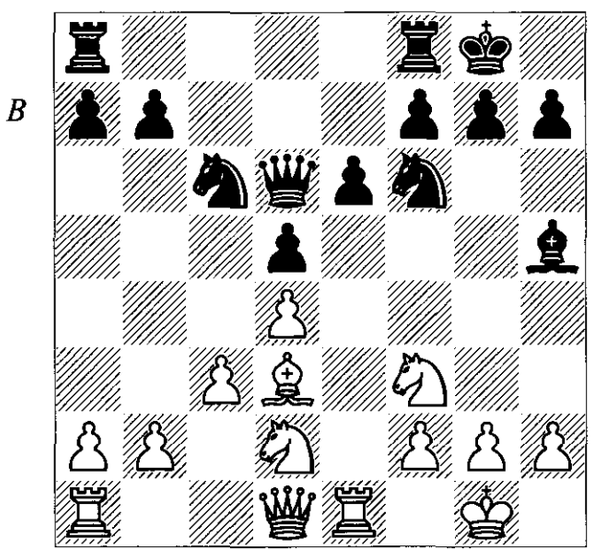
10...♗h5

Emulating White's idea, Black plans to exchange off the annoying d3-bishop with a well-timed ...♗g6.

10...0-0 is playable, since the kingside is the most likely destination for the king, but there is the slight chance of playing ...♗g6 and retaking with the h-pawn, using the open file, so 10...♗h5 is somewhat more flexible and deserves preference.

Early activity with 10...♘h5 deserves consideration in this type of position, although it doesn't turn out to be very appropriate in this case. After 11 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 12 h3!, 12...♗xf3 13 ♘xf3 leaves White with a good bishop – not so major a factor, but something that Black doesn't have to concede. Against the more ambitious 12...♘f4 White would answer, not 13 ♗f1? due to 13...♗f5, but 13 hxg4!, when he would get an edge after 13...♘xd3+ 14 ♔f1 ♘xb2 (after 14...♘f4 15 g3 ♘g6 16 g5! Black will suffer due to the weakness of h7) 15 ♕b3 ♘c4 16 ♘xc4 dxc4 17 ♕xb7 ♖b8 18 ♕a6; thanks to his greater activity White has the advantage. He is threatening the c4-pawn and after 18...♕d5 19 ♖h5! the situation of the black king in the centre takes its toll. If Black keeps playing actively with 19...♖b6, White wins after 20 ♕a4 ♕e4 21 ♖e1 ♕d3+ 22 ♔g1 ♕xc3? 23 ♖c5!.

11 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖e1 *(D)*



13...♖ab8!

The structure is typical of the Exchange Queen's Gambit with colours reversed, so Black hurries to play a minority attack.

14 a4 ♕c7!

Insisting on the idea of having the advance ...b5 ready, but without rushing. Black is taking into account what White might do: after the direct 14...a6?! there would follow the blocking move 15 a5!, after which playing ...b5 would lead to a serious deterioration of the pawn-structure.

15 ♕b1 a6 16 ♘e5 ♖fe8!!

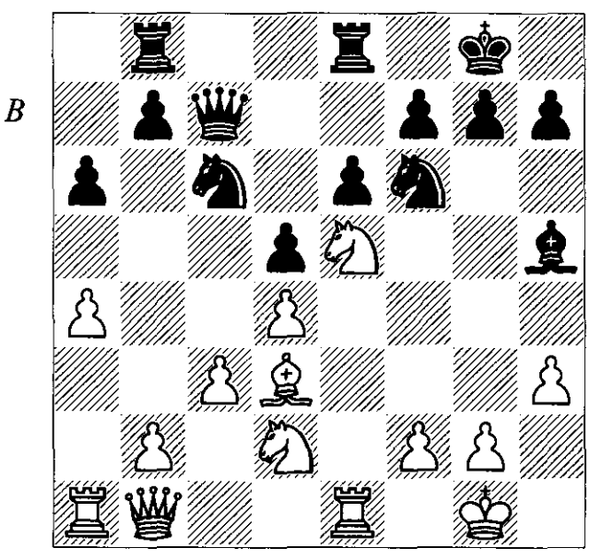
Hardly an obvious move to make. The position has a closed or semi-closed character, so manoeuvres without an immediate motivation

are plausible. Black delays one of his ideas, namely to play ...♗g6 exchanging White's strong bishop, in order to play a move that might be useful once the e5-knight is exchanged.

It is not clear whether 16...b5 is good for Black: after 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♘b3 the weakness of c5 is worrying, and besides, the opening of the a-file doesn't seem to favour him.

17 h3 *(D)*

Anand points out he was not afraid of 17 ♘xc6? because he had 17...bxc6!, and in the event of 18 ♗xa6 ♕b6, Black has a sound pawn-structure whereas White has three pawn-islands.



17...♗g6!

Only now – there are no longer any useful alternatives. 17...b5 is still unconvincing, for the same reasons as before.

18 ♗xg6

It might seem surprising that White parts with his proud bishop, but had he exchanged the knight with 18 ♘xg6 hxg6 19 ♘f3 Black would fully justify his move 16...♖fe8!! with the break 19...e5! and after a series of exchanges on e5 Black would end up controlling the open file.

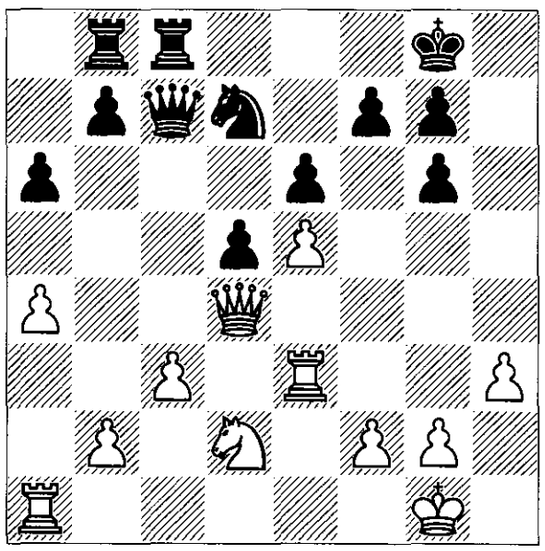
18...hxg6 19 ♕d3 ♘xe5 20 dxe5?!

Now White doesn't achieve anything important by controlling the d6- and f6-squares. Rather he damages his structure by creating a weak pawn on e5 and conceding important squares on the queenside. Better was 20 ♖xe5!, when Anand intended to play 20...♖ec8, improving the activity of the rook and with ideas of ...♘e8-d6, with reasonable play. 20...b5 seems playable too because the previous drawbacks are no longer there.

20...♘d7 21 ♕d4 ♖ec8

The rook wasn't doing anything on e8. Instead insisting on 21...b5?! would allow 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♖a7, when it is White who profits from the break ...b5, the a-file having been opened in his favour.

22 ♖e3 *(D)*



22...♕b6!

An exchange of queens is the most important type of simplification. In this case it undoubtedly favours Black because both the e5-pawn and the queenside are weak, and Black has the half-open c-file.

23 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 24 h4

A good move, fixing the doubled pawns. In this game this factor could not be exploited but any move that improves one's own position and hinders, albeit minimally, the enemy position must be made.

24...♔f8

The king is a strong piece in almost all endgames. Black needs to centralize it.

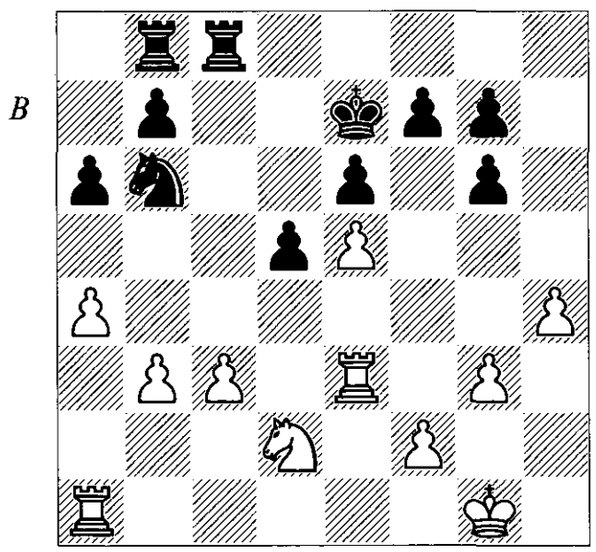
Is it convenient to exchange the knights with 24...♘c4? Since it is difficult to know, Black doesn't make any critical decision and strengthens his position before adopting more radical measures, keeping open the possibility of the knight exchange.

25 g3 ♔e7 26 b3?! *(D)*

White wants to avoid the constant threat of the knight exchange but it comes at a high price – he weakens the c3-pawn. White was counting

on getting rid of the weakness later but he failed to do so, as we shall see.

Better were both 26 f4 and 26 ♘f3, keeping the disadvantage to a minimum.



The target is the c3-pawn. What is the most effective way of doubling rooks against it?

26...♖c7!?

This seems better than 26...♖c6, which provokes 27 ♘f3. It's an open question whether 26...♖c5!? is superior.

27 a5

By driving away the b6-knight, White seeks to play c4 and get rid of his weakness.

Had White left the queenside untouched, playing 27 ♘f3 instead, Black would have opened the game in his favour with the manoeuvre 27...♖bc8 28 ♖c1 d4! 29 ♘xd4 ♘d5, regaining the pawn with more active pieces and with White's weaknesses more accessible.

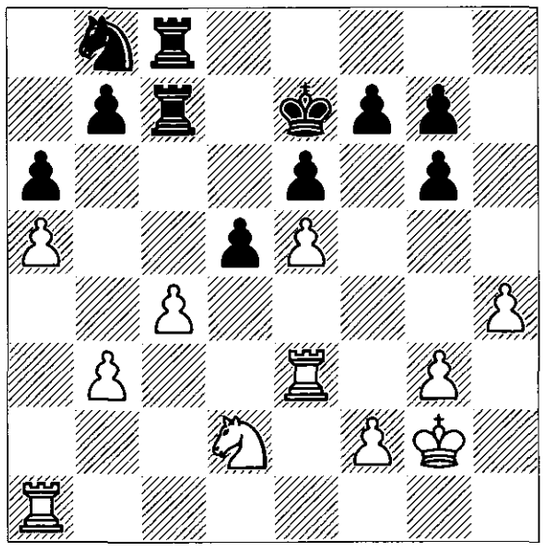
27...♘d7 28 c4 ♖bc8!

Black doesn't repair White's structure and has no objections to his own being damaged, opening the c-file, for after 29 cxd5 ♖c1+ 30 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 31 ♔g2 exd5 White has no fewer than three obvious weaknesses, the pawns on a5, b3 and e5, while the isolation of the d5-pawn is unimportant – it could quickly become a passed pawn, supported by the centralized king.

29 ♔g2 ♘b8! *(D)*

The only improvable piece is the knight, which is now heading for c6, putting pressure on the a5- and e5-pawns and threatening to invade White's camp via b4.

30 ♖a4



White prevents the future jump of the knight to b4 and leaves the structure untouched. As Anand points out, opening the c-file with 30 cxd5 exd5 only favours Black; for instance, 31 ♖a4 is met by 31...♖c3!, when White's weaknesses are accessible to Black.

30...♖d8!

Now that the white rooks have lost their coordination, Black seeks to infiltrate along the d-file.

A plausible question is, why did he reject his original idea of 30...♘c6?

The answer is that White would show another virtue of 30 ♖a4 by playing 31 cxd5 exd5, when 32 ♘f3 ♖d7 33 ♖f4, with the latent threat of e6! followed by ♖g4, gives White counterplay. It is not serious but there is no reason to allow the opponent to overcome his passivity. Instead, 32 e6 only appears attractive (32...fxe6 33 ♖g4 gives White counterplay), as Black has the *zwischenzug* 32...d4! at his disposal, when the a4-rook can't switch to the kingside. Black captures the pawn under better conditions after 33 ♖e4 fxe6.

31 f4 ♘c6 32 ♖d3 ♖cd7 33 c5!

With this advance White manages to solve his main problems on the queenside, at the expense of devaluing his pawn-majority.

33...f6!

Black, on the other hand, seeks to exploit his majority in the centre and on the kingside.

34 ♘f3 d4

Intending to increase the pressure on e5 and c5 with 35...♖d5.

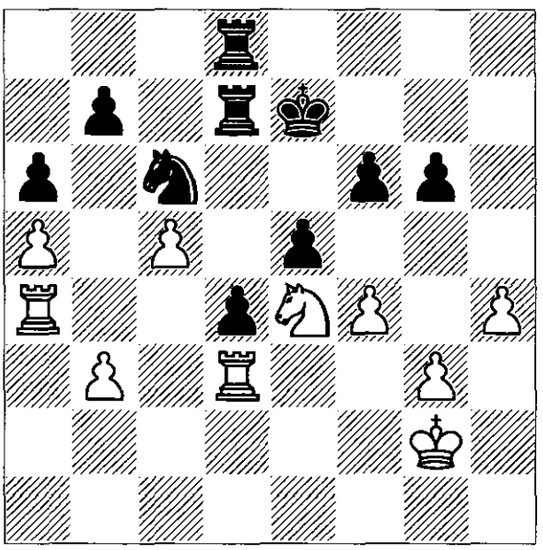
35 exf6+?

White commits a fatal mistake, after which Black's central pawns will become too strong. White should play 35 ♖c4!, intending b4, when it is very difficult for Black to make progress.

35...gxf6 36 ♘d2 e5 37 ♘e4 *(D)*

Heading for d6. Instead after 37 fxe5? ♘xe5! Black wins material.

B



37...♖d5!

37...f5?! followed by 38...e4, getting two united passed pawns, seemed strong. However, putting ourselves in our opponent's shoes we see that after 38 ♘d6 e4 White has the sacrifice 39 ♖dxd4! ♘xd4 40 ♖xd4. Since there are no open files, the black rooks cannot yet show their strength and the white pieces are well placed to try to achieve a fortress.

38 fxe5 ♖xe5 39 ♘d6 ♖xc5 40 ♘xb7?

The last error, although it was difficult to hold the game a pawn down after the forced 40 ♘c4.

40...♖c2+ 0-1

White resigned in view of 41 ♔h3 ♖b8.

From a very early stage, Black made several moves that demonstrate that hindering the opponent's intentions, if they are strong, is as important as making progress with one's own plans: with 5...♕c7!, and then with 30...♖d8! instead of 30...♘c6?!, and by 37...♖d5! instead of 37...f5?!.

The importance of knowing the typical plans of the chosen structure, like the minority attack in this case, was shown by choosing 13...♖ab8!, although finally the course of the struggle made it inadvisable to carry this plan out.

Flexibility is important too, as we should avoiding mechanically playing a standard plan if it is not appropriate. With 16...♖fe8!!, Black left to one side the programmed break, refraining from both 16...b5 and 17...b5.

Changes in the structure must be considered very carefully, accurately evaluating who benefits from them. White made the wrong decision with 20 dxe5?!, whereas Black chose the right way by not breaking on b5 with the aforementioned 16...b5 or 17...b5.

Let's note how important it is to decide which piece to exchange: both sides tried to exchange the opponent's stronger bishop. The queen exchange 22...♕b6 was particularly important. However, it was only after 35 exf6+? that White's position became hopeless.

In the next game too, prophylaxis made an early appearance, in this case to hinder Black from obtaining comfortable play.

Game 22

Peter Leko – Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Wijk aan Zee 2008

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Steinitz Defence Deferred

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 d6 5 0-0

The most popular continuation is 5 c3 but White has a different idea in mind.

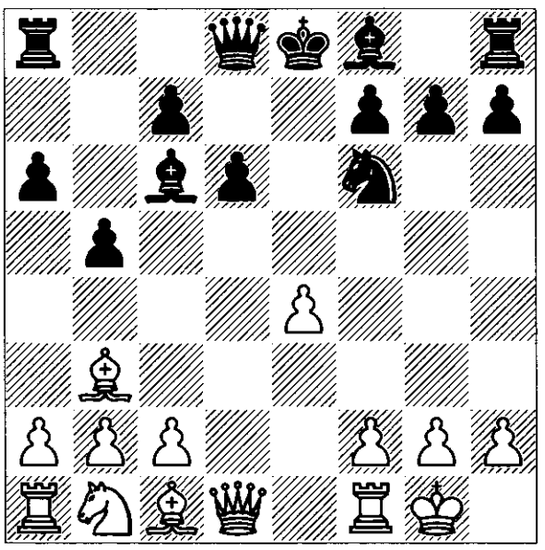
5...♗d7

Black does not seek to 'punish' the move-order chosen by White. This would be done by 5...♗g4, but Black needs to be ready to enter very complex lines after, for instance, 6 h3 h5 and now either 7 ♗xc6+ bxc6 8 d4 or 7 d4 at once. Leko thinks it risky for Black "if White knows how to react".

6 d4 exd4 7 ♘xd4 b5 8 ♘xc6

A forced exchange since 8 ♗b3?? loses a piece after 8...♘xd4 9 ♕xd4 c5 and 10...c4.

8...♗xc6 9 ♗b3 ♘f6 *(D)*



The exchange on c6 allowed Black to put pressure on the e4-pawn. How should White protect it?

The most natural is 10 ♘c3 since the open e-file prevents the capture of the pawn. We shall examine it below in Supplementary Game 22.1, which was contested by the same players in the same tournament two years earlier.

White can seek to increase his influence in the centre by playing c4 but after 10 f3 ♗e7 11 c4 the lack of control of d5 allows Black good play with 11...bxc4 12 ♗xc4 d5, as Ivanchuk pointed out.

10 c4!

White increases the tension in the centre and the queenside because the e4-pawn is immune: both 10...♘xe4? 11 ♖e1 ♗e7 12 cxb5 axb5 13 ♕f3 0-0 14 ♖xe4 and 10...♗xe4 11 ♘c3 ♗b7 12 ♖e1+ ♗e7 13 ♕e2 are unsatisfactory for Black.

10...♗e7 11 ♘c3 0-0

The pawn is still untouchable – 11...♘xe4? 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♕d4 leads to disaster.

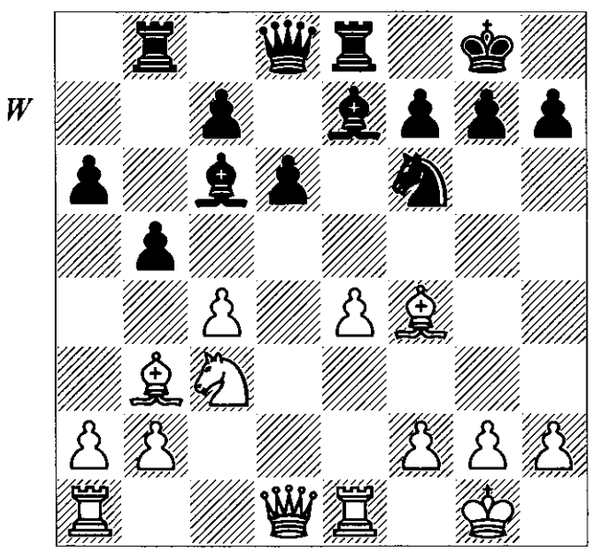
12 ♖e1 ♖e8

What should White play now? Stopping the manoeuvre ...♘d7 with 13 ♕f3 was not enough to gain any advantage in Shirov-Mamedyarov, Moscow 2007. Black replied with the now correct 13...b4!, which would seem inconsistent with what we previously said when Black made this advance at the wrong time. The reason is that ...b4 is not always bad, only when it weakens the position without getting anything in return (as is the case in Supplementary Game 22.1). After 14 ♘d5 a5 15 a4, Black managed to ease off the pressure the b3-bishop exerts on f7 and manoeuvre to attain a satisfactory position with 15...♘d7 16 ♗e3 ♗f6.

13 ♗f4!

Before deciding something important, such as where to put the queen, White carries on developing, delaying any direct actions. This is helped by the fact that 13...♘d7?! is answered with 14 cxb5 axb5 15 ♕h5, hitting b5 and f7.

13...♖b8 *(D)*



Black overprotects b5, preparing ...♘d7. How should White reply? Knowing what the opponent is trying to do provides a good clue.

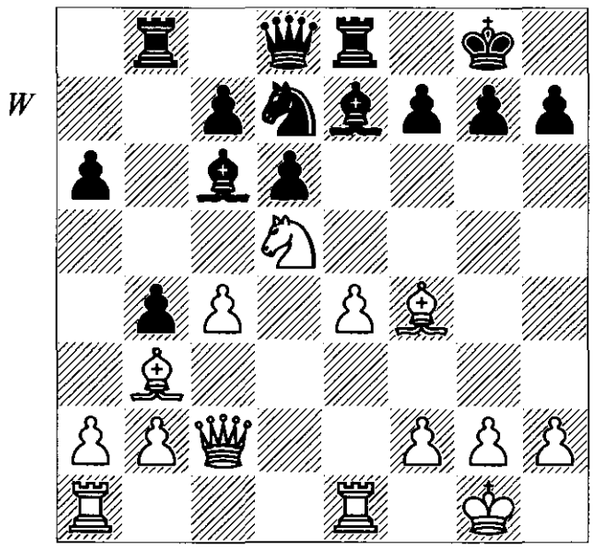
14 ♕c2!

Leko was very proud of finding this move at the board. He was also proud of having got his preparation right – he had evaluated this position as not of the tactical sort, where all analysis has to be revised in depth. Here it is more important to understand the character of the struggle. His conclusion is that the tension on b5 must be kept at the maximum. 14...♘d7 is prevented because there would follow 15 cxb5 axb5 16 ♗d5!, when the black queenside, c7 in particular, ends up weak. White has a clear advantage, according to Leko.

14...b4

This situation is not as favourable as before to push the pawn but Black considers that the damage is minimal and that he can thus regroup his pieces.

15 ♘d5 ♘d7 *(D)*



And now? There are several possibilities.

Leko indicated that, as before, exchanging the light-squared bishops would be welcomed in principle because White would have easier access to those squares. However, 16 ♗a4?! ♗xa4 17 ♕xa4 ♘c5 18 ♕c6 is met by the unpleasant blow 18...♘d3, when the white pieces are repelled.

Another idea is to open up the queenside with 16 a3. After 16...bxa3! 17 ♖xa3 Black's structure is bad, with three pawn-islands, but Black gets counterplay with 17...♘c5, and thanks to this strong knight and the b-file, it cannot be said that 16 a3 has helped White's cause.

Given that there is still nothing concrete, what would be the most consistent with prophylactic thinking?

16 ♗e3!

Preventing 16...♘c5?!, after which there would follow 17 ♗xc5, seriously damaging Black's structure and ending up virtually a pawn up in the centre and kingside.

It can be objected that an already developed piece is moved. While this is perfectly true, the jam White creates in the coordination of the black pieces is more damaging. Black cannot exploit this 'gift' of a tempo and must make positional moves instead. He is more limited than White because he has less space.

16...♗f8 17 f3

Freely continuing with the strengthening of his central grip.

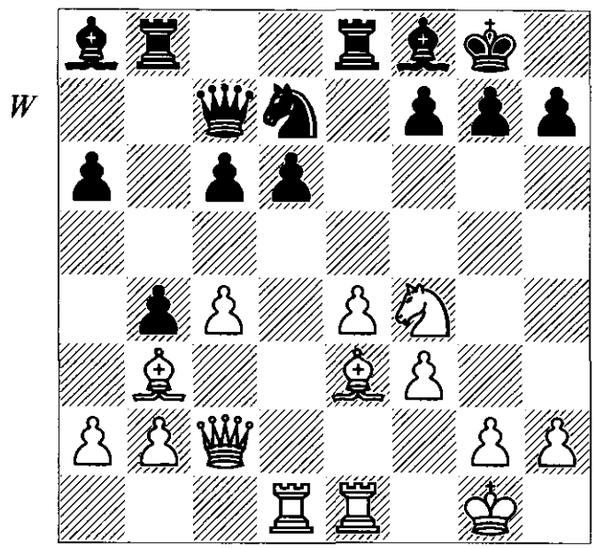
17...♗a8 18 ♖ad1

White finishes his development – all his pieces occupy optimal positions.

18...c6

The d5-knight is an unbearable enemy in the long-term. With this move Black regains some scope to manoeuvre.

19 ♘f4 ♕c7 *(D)*



We have reached a sort of Indian structure, where Black typically has a weakness on d6 that is not easy to exploit. Furthermore we know that it is generally possible to defend a single weakness.

Black only needs two pawn moves, ...a5 and ...g6, to attain a fully acceptable position, as Leko explained.

What should White play? Increasing the pressure on d6 doesn't seem to get anywhere but Black has another reason for being uncomfortable, namely his a8-bishop, which is out of play. How should White try to exploit this?

20 ♘d3!

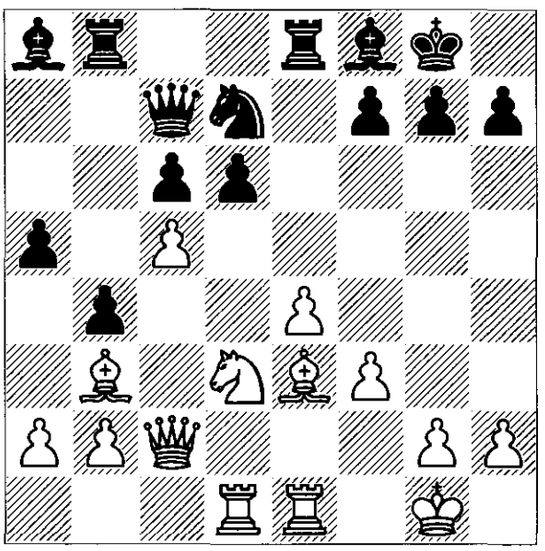
"The key move of the position ... the hidden potential of the b3-bishop has stopped Black from playing ...♘d7 in all the positions before he finally was forced to commit himself with ...b4. Now 20 ♘d3 prepares the opening of the a2-g8 diagonal with c5 and it also opens the d-file for the white rooks." (Leko).

20...a5

The advance could have been stopped radically by 20...c5 but White would regroup very strongly by playing 21 ♗a4, followed by the return of the knight to its dominant post with 22 ♘f4 and 23 ♘d5. It would then be impossible

to dislodge, with a strategically winning position for White.

21 c5! *(D)*

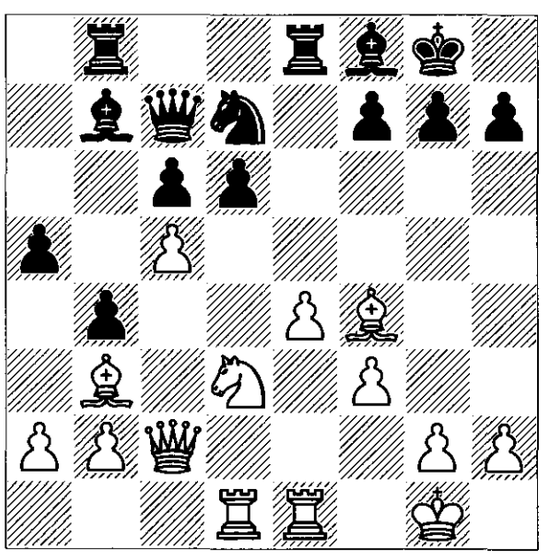


The difference in activity and the absence of the a8-bishop will become apparent after this advance.

21...♗b7

Trying to get back into the game via a6, although this won't be successful. No better was 21...♘xc5 22 ♘xc5 dxc5 23 ♗xc5 ♗xc5+ 24 ♕xc5, because as Leko points out Black could only "sit and wait" whereas White could use his kingside majority to attack after reinforcing his position at will.

22 ♗f4! *(D)*

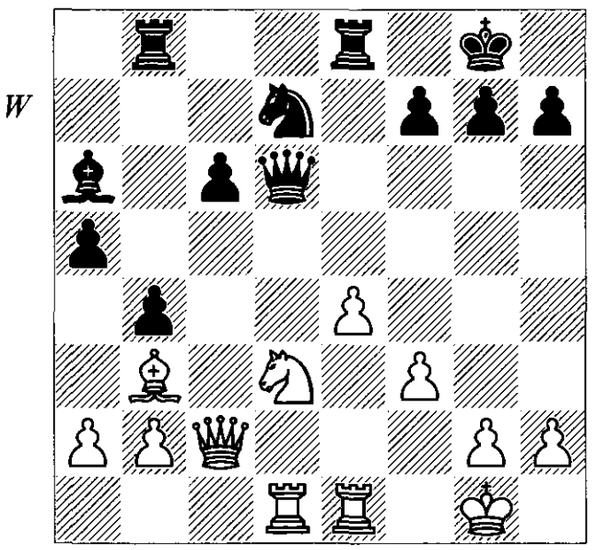


Not allowing the activation of the b7-bishop. Black fails to perceive the full strength of this move.

22...♗a6?

This was Black's idea but a nice tactical blow will refute it. It was necessary to reach a similar position to the one previously indicated with 22...♘e5 23 cxd6 ♗xd6 24 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 25 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 26 f4 ♖e7 27 ♕c5, when although Black's prospects are not encouraging in the long run, at least he can still fight.

23 cxd6 ♗xd6 24 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 *(D)*



25 ♘e5!

The white rook manages to infiltrate to d7, winning material. Black's position turns critical.

25...♕xe5 26 ♖xd7 ♖ed8 27 ♖ed1

White doesn't hurry to capture the f7-pawn, preferring instead to keep all the advantages – the pawn won't run away.

Somewhat unexpectedly for Leko, Black resigned here. Although this might seem premature, the post-mortem proved Mamedyarov right because there is nothing resilient for Black to be found. Once the f7-pawn falls, White will have a monster passed e-pawn.

1-0

This game deservedly obtained the prize that the experts award to the best game of each round in Wijk aan Zee.

Prophylactic thinking dominated most of the first stage, beginning with 14 ♕c2!, in order to play 16 ♗e3! later on, in both cases preventing the regrouping ...♘d7.

Only then, with Black already in a passive position, did White start taking active measures with 20 ♘d3! and 21 c5!, finding the

best way to exploit the absence of the a8-bishop and reactivating the strong b3-bishop, whose role was highlighted by Leko in his notes to the 20th move.

Thanks to the elegant tactical blow 25 ♘e5!, White obtained a winning advantage by occupying the seventh rank, with control of the open file and the weaknesses of f7 and c6 exposed.

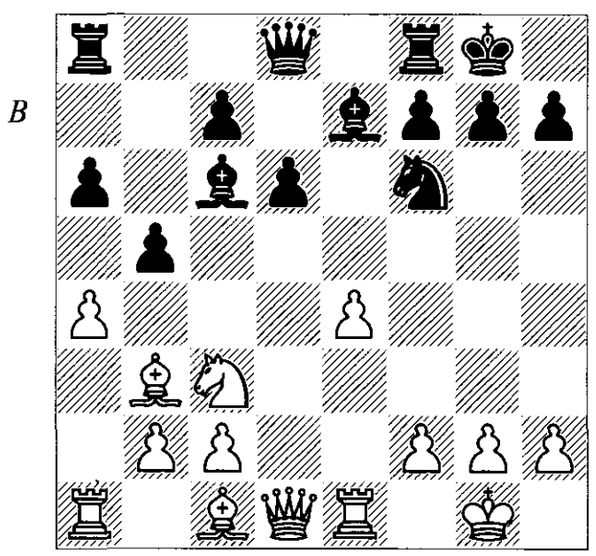
Supplementary Game 22.1

Peter Leko – Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Wijk aan Zee 2006

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Steinitz Defence Deferred

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 d6 5 0-0 ♗d7 6 d4 exd4 7 ♘xd4 b5 8 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 9 ♗b3 ♘f6 10 ♘c3 ♗e7 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 a4 *(D)*



12...b4?!

Black makes an instructive error: when there is no gain of some kind, it is inadvisable to weaken the structure and enhance the b3-bishop's prospects.

Later Mamedyarov improved with 12...♖e8, not compromising his queenside structure and preparing the thematic manoeuvre of the f6-knight to the queenside. Vachier-Lagrave – Mamedyarov, Moscow 2006 went 13 ♕d3 ♖b8 14 ♗g5 ♘d7 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 17 ♘d5 ♖e5 18 ♘b4 ♗xe4?! 19 ♖xe4 ♘c5 and ended 20 ♘c6? ♘xd3 21 ♘xd8 ♖xe4 ½-½, but 20 ♗xf7+! is better; for example, 20...♔h8 21 ♘c6 ♘xd3 22 ♘xd8 ♖xe4 23 ♘c6 ♘e5 23 ♗d5.

13 ♘d5 ♗xd5 14 exd5 ♘d7

14...a5 is met by 15 ♗c4, when the bishop has absolute control over the light squares.

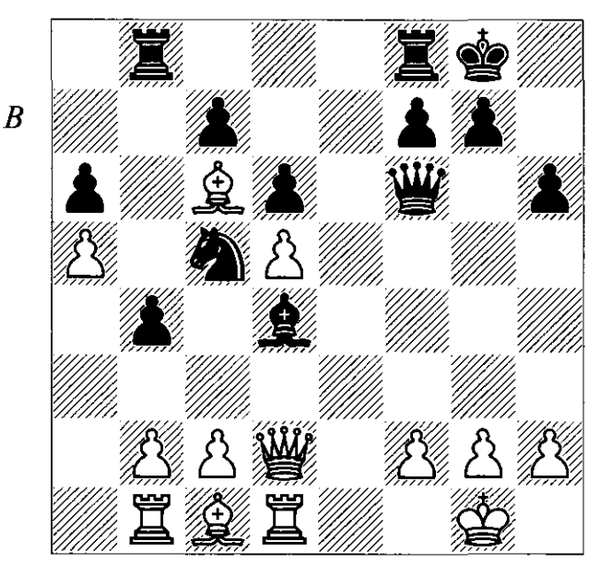
15 a5!

Effectively isolating the b4-pawn and fixing a weakness on a6; moreover, White is now able to activate the b3-bishop.

15...♘c5 16 ♗a4 ♖b8!

Leko points out that 16...♘xa4 17 ♖xa4 ♖b8 is met by 18 ♕d2!, when White wins the b4-pawn or captures a vital one on a6 after 18...b3 19 ♕d3.

17 ♗c6 ♗f6 18 ♕e2 ♗d4 19 ♖b1 ♕f6 20 ♖d1 h6 21 ♕d2 *(D)*



21...♖fe8?

Giving up the exchange without enough compensation is a decisive mistake. 21...♗c3! is stronger, when White would have to start all over again with 22 ♕e2! (not 22 ♕f4 because of the brilliant reply 22...b3!! 23 cxb3 ♖xb3, and the black pieces are active; the same would follow after 22 ♕e3) 22...♗d4 23 h3!.

22 ♗xe8

White has neutralized Black's momentary activity and eventually converted the exchange:

22...♖xe8 23 ♕f4 b3 24 c3! ♕e7 25 ♗d2 ♗e5 26 ♕g4 ♘e4 27 ♗e3 g6 28 g3 ♗g7 29 ♖e1 h5 30 ♕e2 h4 31 ♕xa6 f5 32 ♕b5 ♗e5 33 a6 hxg3 34 fxg3 ♔f7 35 a7 ♖h8 36 ♕b8 ♖xh2 37 a8♕ 1-0

In this supplementary game, we saw the importance of keeping the tension. Every pawn advance is weakening, and although you cannot avoid pawn advances, there must be counterbalances, otherwise the pawn can leave weaknesses exposed and/or become itself a weakness.

To close the chapter, we shall now see one of the examples where Karpov shows his extraordinary ability to stop the opponent's activity by unexpected moves.

Since there is an 'Immortal Zugzwang Game' (Sämisch-Nimzowitsch, Copenhagen 1923) perhaps there should also be an 'Immortal Prophylactic Thinking Game'. The following one would be a serious contender to hold that title because of the decisive role that these moves have. Amazingly, a good deal of them were made by a single piece.

Game 23

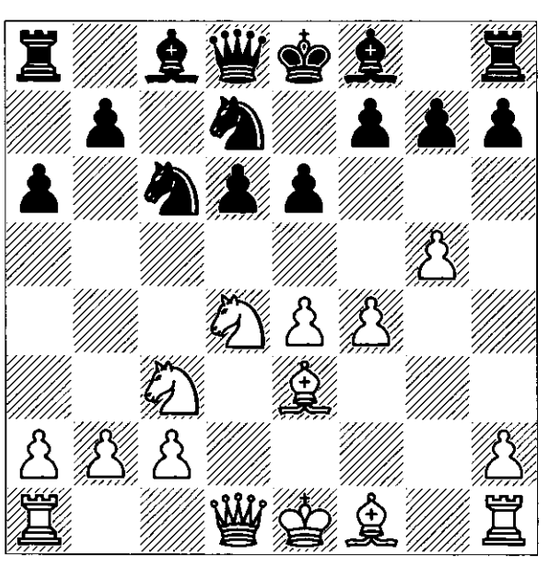
Anatoly Karpov – Vlastimil Hort

Alekhine Memorial, Moscow 1971

Sicilian Defence, Keres Attack

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 g4 ♘c6 7 g5 ♘d7 8 ♗e3 a6 9 f4?! *(D)*

The theory of the Keres Attack, which brought so many victories to Karpov, was still in its infancy at that time. Karpov's move is inaccurate; 9 h4 is better, while 9 ♖g1 has been played too.



B

9...♗e7

The drawback of White's move-order could have been exploited by 9...h6!, based on the fact that 10 gxh6? is wrong due to 10...♕h4+. Karpov wrote that he was planning to play 10 ♘xe6 fxe6 11 ♕h5+ ♔e7 12 ♗h3 ♕e8 13 ♕h4, with consequences that are difficult to evaluate, although Kasparov points out that after 13...♔d8!, followed by 14...♔c7, the compensation for the piece is not sufficient.

10 ♖g1 ♘xd4

Black decides to install the typical 'Sicilian' knight on e5, although in return White will have the d5-square at his disposal. Kasparov was of the opinion that 10...0-0 was a reasonable alternative.

11 ♕xd4 e5 12 ♕d2 exf4 13 ♗xf4 ♘e5

This was the idea. Instead, winning material at the expense of delaying his own development and speeding up White's is a very risky idea in the Sicilian: after 13...♕b6? 14 ♖g3 ♕xb2 15 ♖b1 ♕a3 16 ♘d5 Black's position becomes critical; e.g., 16...♕xa2 17 ♖d1 ♗d8 18 ♗xd6.

14 ♗e2 ♗e6

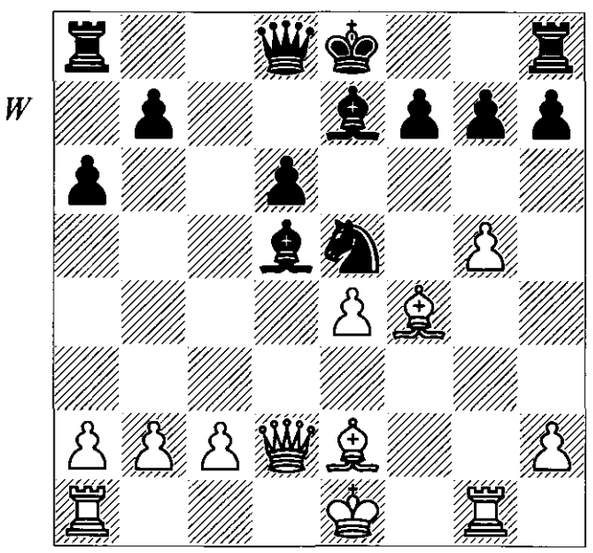
Controlling the d5-square. Karpov points out that 14...♕a5 15 ♘d5 ♕xd2+ is unconvincing, continuing 16 ♔xd2 ♗d8 17 ♖ad1 ♗e6 18 ♔c1, with a clear plus for White because of his greater activity. Kasparov also indicates 16 ♗xd2 ♖b8 (the good thing about taking back with the bishop on d2 is that 16...♗d8 is met by 17 ♗b4!) 17 0-0-0, "and Black comes under a typical bind".

15 ♘d5!

Prophylactic thinking – this move takes away from Black the possibility of activating his queen. In the event of the natural 15 0-0-0

Black has 15...♕a5 at his disposal, as Karpov indicated. This way of playing, foreseeing the opponent's plans and thwarting them when they are an improvement of his position, is a good idea in most situations. However, Kasparov noted that in this concrete case a similar position to the one in the previous note could be reached by 16 ♔b1! ♖c8 17 ♘d5 ♕xd2 18 ♖xd2.

15...♗xd5 *(D)*



How should White recapture?

16 exd5

In most cases there wouldn't be any doubt – taking back with a piece, thus leaving the weakness of d6 exposed, would be best, even more so when there is a chance of posting a knight on d5, but this is not the case here. Karpov preferred to retake with the pawn to get rid of the weakness on e4 and increase the prospects of the e2-bishop, considering that Black doesn't have a light-squared bishop any more.

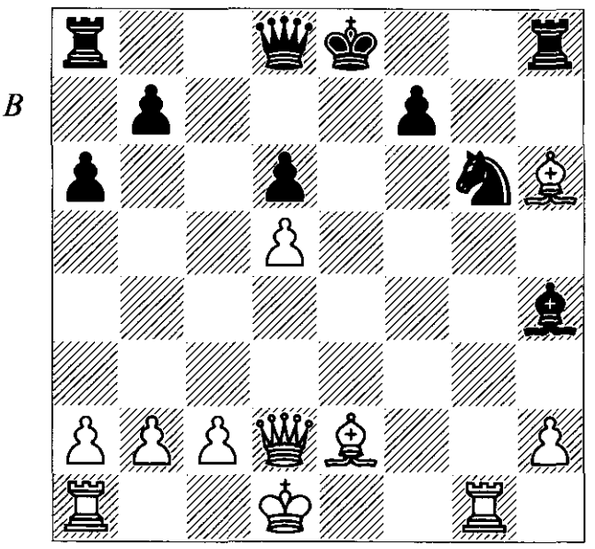
16...♘g6

Trying to complicate the position, given that after 16...0-0 17 0-0-0 the white pieces are much more active.

17 ♗e3 h6!

This is a good pawn sacrifice to stop the white king from taking refuge on the queenside. Although stuck in the centre, the king won't be a clear target in itself given that the black pieces have no easy access to it. What Black is specially keen on, though, is for the white pieces not to be able to coordinate effectively.

18 gxh6 ♗h4+ 19 ♔d1 gxh6 20 ♗xh6 *(D)*



What is Black's best move now?

20...♗f6?!

This very natural move clears the h-file with tempo by hitting b2. However, the reply it 'forces' is needed if White is to hide his king on c2, so the achievement is of questionable value.

A similar comment may be made about 20...♕f6?!, which leaves the h4-bishop somewhat compromised. There can follow 21 c3 0-0-0 22 ♔c2, and the compensation for the pawn is not clear.

This last variation gives us an idea of what might be stronger – using prophylactic thinking we see that the best move is 20...♕e7! (Kasparov) with the idea of castling queenside:

a) Black is attacking the e2-bishop and controlling e4, so he need no longer fear 21 c3 0-0-0 22 ♔c2 ♖xh6! 23 ♗g4+ ♔b8 24 ♕xh6 ♕e4+, when White must accept perpetual check with 25 ♔b3 ♕xd5+ 26 ♔c2 ♕e4+ because 25 ♔d2? loses to 25...♖h8 26 ♕e3 ♗g5! – it's mate in a few moves.

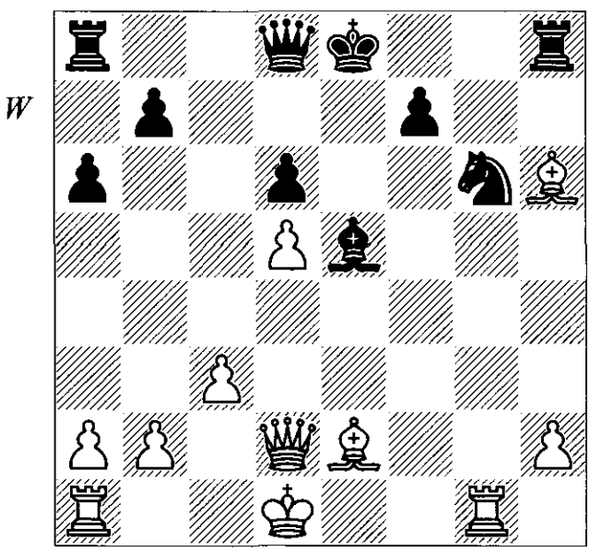
b) No better is 21 ♗g4, preventing Black from castling queenside, for there follows 21...♘e5!, and the bishop is restricted due to the fork on f3.

c) Among other lines Kasparov mentions 21 ♗g7 ♖h7 22 ♗d4 ♗f6 23 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 and now 24 ♔c1 0-0-0, with equality. 24 c3 seems better, when after 24...0-0-0 25 ♔c2 the king has improved his situation at last, but 24...♕e5 keeps things unclear.

21 c3 ♗e5

Black hits the h2-pawn and also clears the way for the queen to h4. Kasparov recommends again 21...♕e7, when after 22 ♗g4 ♘e5 23 ♔c2 Black has 23...♖xh6! 24 ♕xh6 ♘xg4 25 ♖xg4 ♕e2+, and the game should end in a draw, since 26 ♔b3 ♕b5+ 27 ♖b4 ♕xd5+ 28 ♔a4 a5! doesn't look promising. Nevertheless here White seems to have better options at his disposal: 22 ♖e1! is interesting; after, for instance, 22...♘e5 23 ♔c2 0-0-0 24 ♖ad1, or even better 24 ♖g1 ♔b8 25 ♖af1, White has coordinated his pieces more favourably than in the previous variation.

We now return to 21...♗e5 *(D)*:



What does White play now? The fall of the h2-pawn is not the most worrying thing, but continuing with the idea of playing 22 ♔c2 is no good, since 22...♕h4 23 ♗e3 ♕e4+ 24 ♗d3 ♕a4+ 25 b3 ♕a5 leaves the black pieces very active.

22 ♖g4!

"At present what is most important is not to allow the enemy queen to take up an active position on the kingside, where White's pieces are nevertheless slightly hanging." (Karpov).

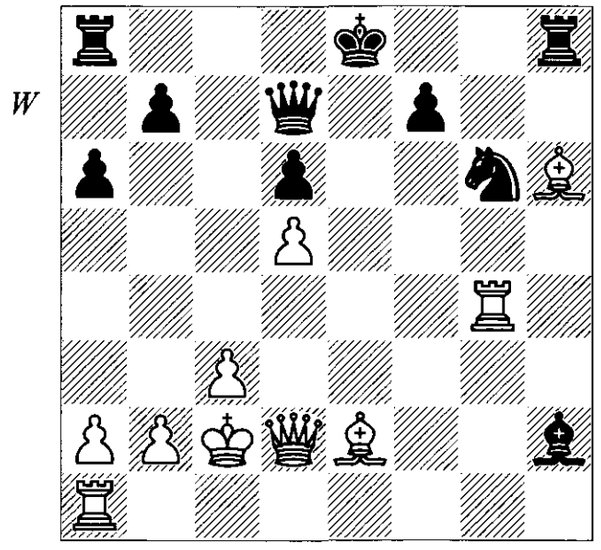
Preventing ...♕h4 is indeed a great achievement, and the rook improves its prospects. It could be objected that White is doing nothing to solve his main problem, namely the jam created by the bad position of his king, but it is also true that Black cannot exploit this yet.

White's priority is to bring the a1-rook into play but this is not possible for the time being – it is a question of priorities, and the main one is to prevent the black pieces from activating and making White's coordination problems worse.

Kasparov suggested 22 ♗g5, also blocking the way for the queen to h4. After 22...♕b6 23 ♔c2! White is better, even though admittedly after 23...♖xh2 24 ♖h1 ♕f2 25 ♖xh2 ♕xh2 26 ♖f1 ♔f8, followed by ...♖e8, from a practical point of view Black's position is easier to defend.

22...♕f6!

Black rises to the occasion. He gets on with his development and seeks to castle queenside. The capture 22...♗xh2?! allows White to solve his coordination problems while the black king is still in the centre. After 23 ♔c2 the move 23...♘e5? does not work because Black loses a piece due to his king in the centre and the isolation of the h2-bishop after 24 ♖g2! ♕h4 25 ♖xh2 ♕xh2 26 ♗b5+. Trying to castle with 23...♕d7 *(D)* doesn't solve Black's problems either.



Here the strength of the light-squared bishop begins to tell. Dvoretsky points out that 24 ♖f1 is strong, but then he prefers Kasparov's even more crushing recommendation, 24 ♖e4+!; e.g., 24...♗e5 (if 24...♘e5, there follows 25 ♖h1 ♕f5 26 ♗d3, and the complete coordination of the white pieces together with the awkward positioning of the black pieces, with his king still in the centre, gives White a strong attack) 25 ♗g4 f5 26 ♕g5! ♘e7 27 ♗h5+ ♔d8 28 ♖xe5! dxe5 29 d6!, winning.

After the text-move, White's priority, as in the lines we have just examined, is to put his queenside in order.

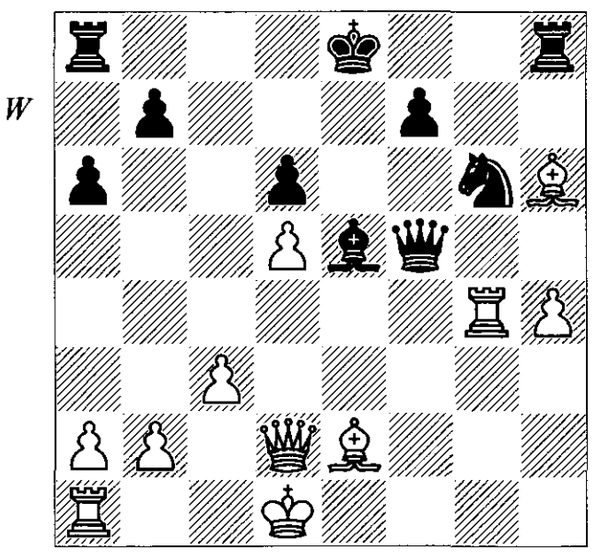
23 h4!

However, 23 ♔c2 is met by 23...♘e7!, winning back the pawn in reasonable circumstances after both 24 ♗e3 and 24 ♗g5 ♕f5+, with a quick ...♖xh2 to follow.

So instead White plays another multi-purpose move: first it avoids capture, and second it prevents Black from castling. It also sets up the threat of 24 h5 followed by 25 ♗g7.

23...♕f5! *(D)*

23...0-0-0? is not possible because of 24 ♗g5, while 23...♘xh4? doesn't work either because of 24 ♗g5.



The black queen has managed to prevent the regrouping intended by White, who is forced to keep playing without the a1-rook. Black plans to castle queenside; meanwhile the white queen is tied to the defence of the h6-bishop and must keep protecting the d5-pawn too.

How should White proceed? Let's remember how important it is both to make progress with one's own plan – which we know very well is to improve the position of the king and to bring the a1-rook into play – and also to hinder Black's; that is, to ask oneself "what is my opponent intending?"

24 ♖b4!

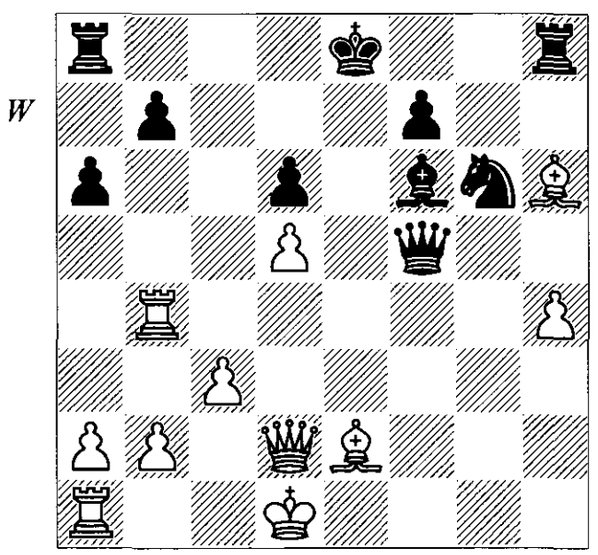
The white king must keep waiting but meanwhile this prevents the black king from getting to safety and bringing the a8-rook into play, since 24...0-0-0? loses to 25 ♗g4.

The threat to the b7-pawn must be taken into account, but more importantly for White it can disrupt Black's coordination. We see what a transcendental impact the rook is having on the struggle. Therefore moving it away must be carefully meditated. Since the rook no longer needs to be defended by the e2-bishop, under some circumstances it might be possible to play ♗d3 followed by ♔c2, but not immediately because there is ...♕h5+ capturing the h6-bishop.

24...♗f6?! *(D)*

Kasparov criticized this move because it loses control of the f4-square, which White will use to consolidate his position.

Even though Black doesn't achieve equality with 24...♖g8 25 ♗d3 ♕h3! 26 ♔c2 ♘xh4 or 24...♘e7 25 ♗g5 f6 26 ♗e3 ♗g3 27 h5 ♘xd5, "he would at least regain the pawn and retain some practical chances." (Kasparov).



25 h5

Karpov doesn't overlook the opportunity to worsen the positioning of an enemy piece, and the pawn is now safer too. An optimistic person would say that on top of that it comes one little step closer to promotion.

25...♘e7

This is not a dream destination for the knight but the move is forced. 25...♘e5? loses to 26 ♖f4.

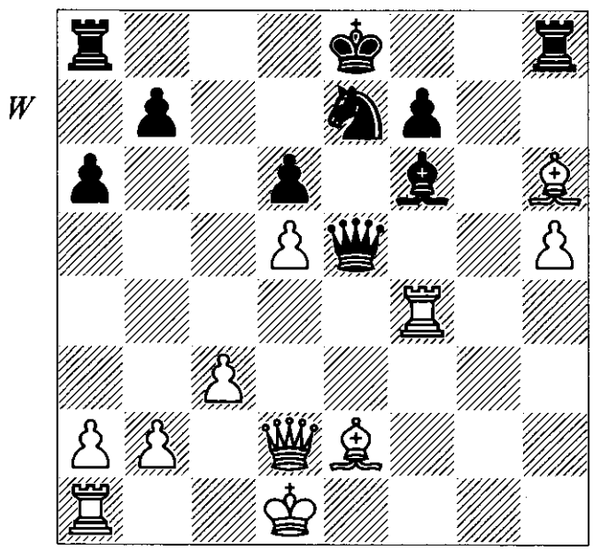
26 ♖f4!

Back comes the rook! And this time it aims to solve White's greatest problem.

Note that if the endgame was reached, that optimistic person happy to have played 25 h5

would be very satisfied, but Kasparov points out that 26 ♕f4?!, trying to activate the forces at the cost of the d5-pawn, doesn't work because 26...♖xh6! 27 ♕xh6 ♘xd5 28 ♖g4 (28 ♖xb7 ♕e4!) 28...0-0-0 29 ♕d2 ♖e8 gives Black a dangerous initiative for the exchange.

26...♕e5 *(D)*



27 ♖f3?

Kasparov noted that this move is a tactical mistake which could have spoiled all the previous colossal work. Both 27 ♖f2 and 27 ♖f1 were better.

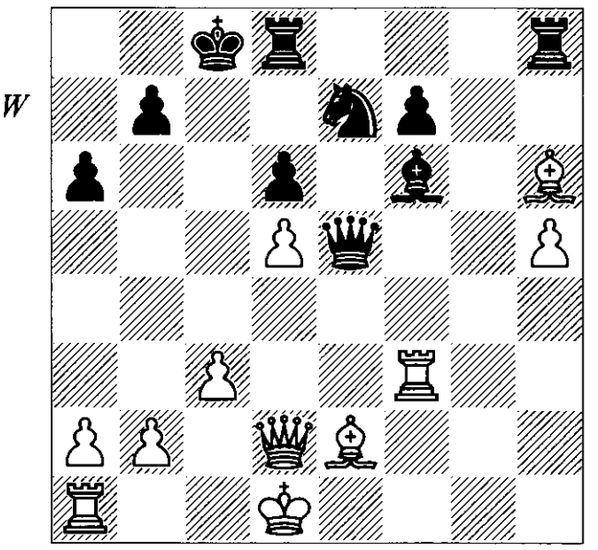
If 27 ♖f1, the sacrifice 27...♖xh6 wouldn't solve Black's problems because after 28 ♕xh6 ♘f5 White can return the exchange and end up with a sound extra pawn after 29 ♖xf5 ♕xf5 30 ♕e3+ ♔f8 31 ♕f3. 27...0-0-0 is better although 28 ♗f4 gives White a clear advantage after both 28...♕xd5 29 ♕xd5 ♘xd5 30 ♗d2 and 28...♕e4 29 c4 ♖hg8 30 ♕d3! ♕xd3+ 31 ♗xd3 ♗xb2 32 ♖b1 (Kasparov) because White's bishop-pair together with the passed pawn and the weak black pawns forebodes a difficult defensive task for Black.

27...♘xd5?!

Short of time, Hort doesn't make the most of the only chance Karpov gave him. 27...♕xh5? is bad due to 28 ♖xf6 ♕h1+ 29 ♗f1 ♘g8 30 ♕e1+, winning.

The right path is 27...0-0-0! *(D)*, when the position is still complicated but already without any superiority for White:

a) Of course 28 ♔c2? wouldn't do because of 28...♖xh6!.

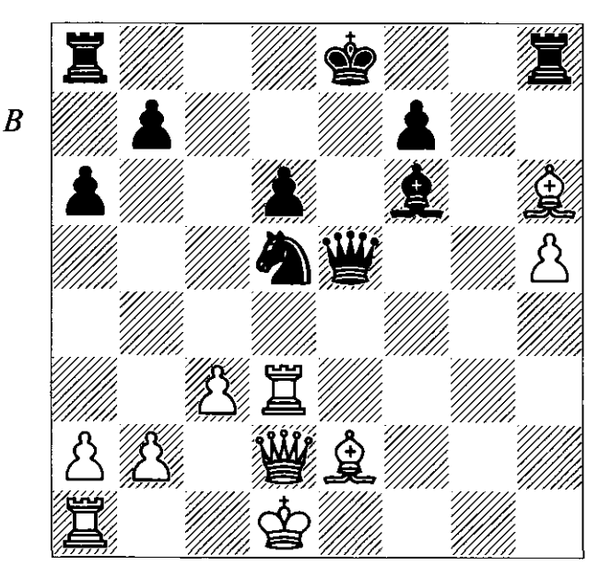


b) 28 ♗f4 can be met by 28...♕xh5! (Dvoretsky) without any trouble (here we see one reason why 27 ♖f3? is wrong), when 29 ♔c2 loses yet another pawn due to 29...♕xd5, whereas after 29 c4 there is still the problem of White's king in the centre, whereas Black has solved his own. There could follow 29...♕g6 30 ♖f1 ♕g7, and the b2-pawn is now a weakness.

c) It is not more encouraging to play 28 ♖d3 ♖dg8 29 ♗f4 ♕f5, with the idea of 30...♖g2.

d) 28 ♖f1 attempts to return the pawn, acknowledging the error; e.g., 28...♘xd5 29 ♗f4 ♕e4 30 ♕c2, although even then no one (including Dvoretsky and Kasparov) has demonstrated a plus for White. 28...♖xh6! 29 ♕xh6 ♗g5 30 ♕h7 ♘xd5 is even clearer, and draws at once.

28 ♖d3! *(D)*



Now the rook does indeed deliver the definitive blow.

28...♖xh6

The retreat 28...♘e7? doesn't offer any resistance due to 29 ♗f4 ♕f5 and now developing the a1-rook with 30 ♔c2, followed by ♖f1, when the two bishops dominate the position, or the simple 30 ♖xd6.

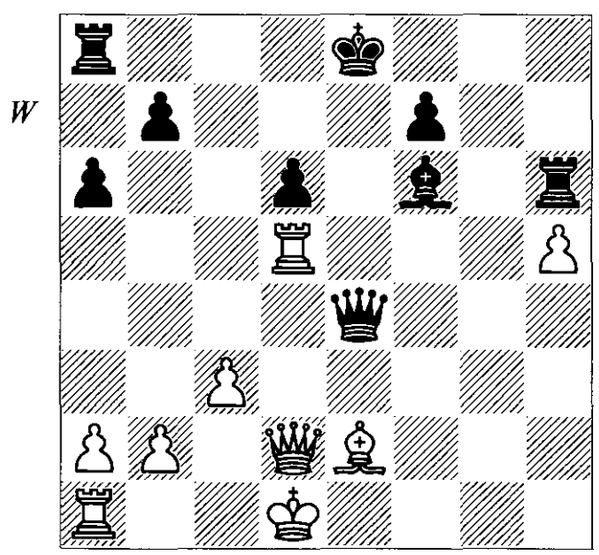
29 ♖xd5

Not, of course, 29 ♕xh6? ♗g5 30 ♕h7 ♘e3+, when White must return the exchange, and so lose his advantage.

29...♕e4 *(D)*

If 29...♕e6, rather than playing 30 ♔c2, finally bringing the a1-rook into play but with even material, White seems to be better off entering the endgame a pawn up with 30 ♖xd6 ♕xd6 31 ♕xd6 ♖d8 32 ♕xd8+ ♗xd8 33 ♗f3.

The active queen move actually chosen by Black prevents ♔c2, threatens ...♕h1+, and keeps the d5-rook under attack.



Now exchanging rooks doesn't get White anywhere: 30 ♕xh6?! ♕xd5+ 31 ♔c2 ♕e4+ 32 ♗d3 ♕a4+ 33 b3 ♕h4. It seems as though White's problems remain – who will be the one in charge of solving them?

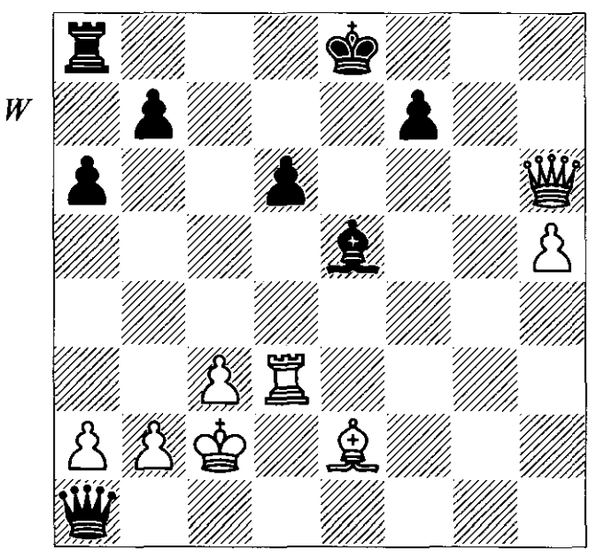
30 ♖d3!

"That rook again! A player is accustomed to all his pieces working hard, but I think that one would agree that, as regards rooks, this applies mainly to the endgame." (Karpov).

30...♕h1+?

Black's time-trouble makes White's task easier. It is better to defend against the threats 31 ♖e3 and 31 ♕xh6 by 30...♕h7!, with a long struggle still ahead. For instance, 31 ♔c2 0-0-0 32 ♗f3 gives White the better position – his passed pawn distracts the black pieces, and once the problems of the pin of the d3-rook are solved, the black king will be worse, besieged by White's major pieces with the support of an annoying bishop that has no counterpart.

31 ♔c2 ♕xa1 32 ♕xh6 ♗e5 *(D)*



33 ♕g5!

Forcing the black king to stay in the centre, where it won't be able to survive. As usual the presence of opposite-coloured bishops means that the attack is played virtually with an extra piece.

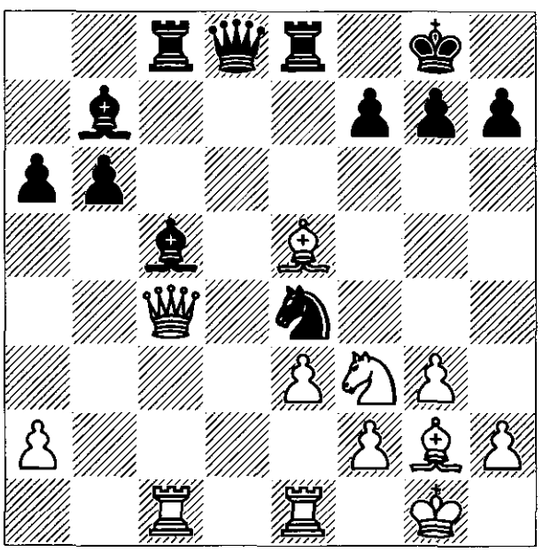
1-0

Black lost on time but after, for instance, 33...♖d8 34 ♔b3, followed by the timely invasion by the bishop and the rook, there is no defence – the passed pawn also helps.

This wonderful and immensely instructive work won the Best Game Prize in the Alekhine Memorial of 1971. The mistake on the 27th move doesn't take away any of the merit – don't you think?

Exercises for Chapter 5

34
W



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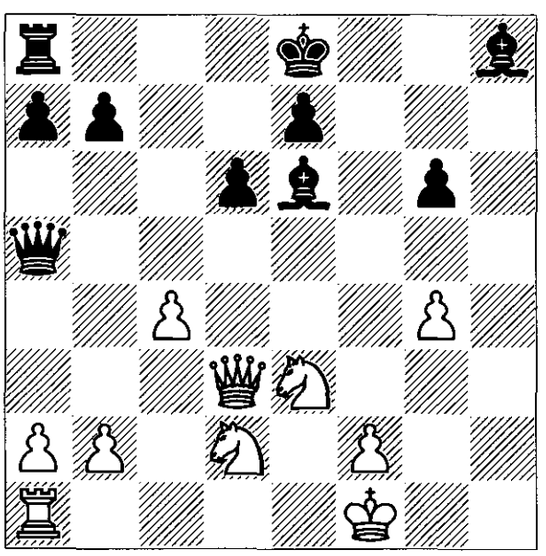

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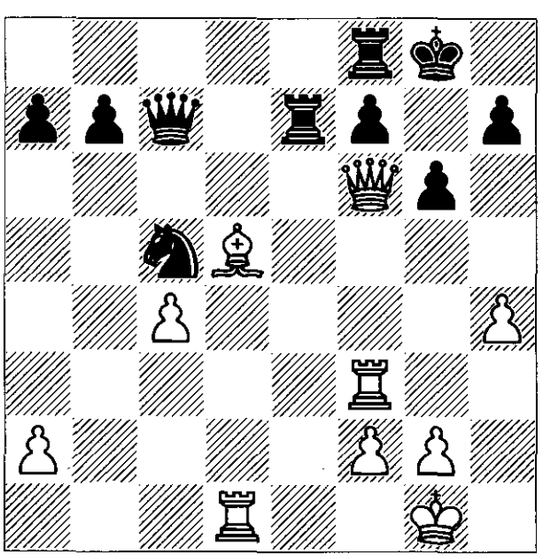

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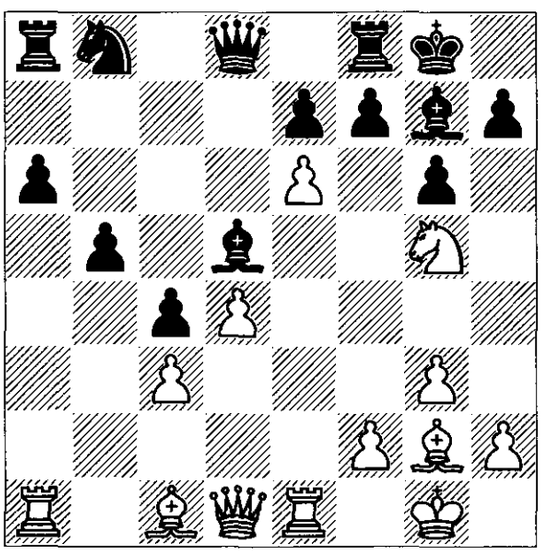

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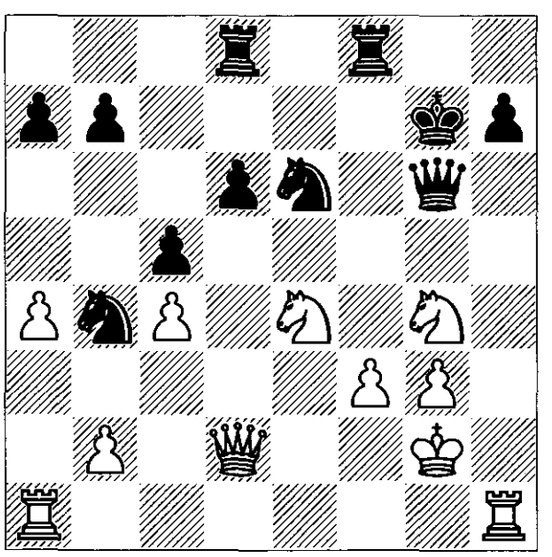

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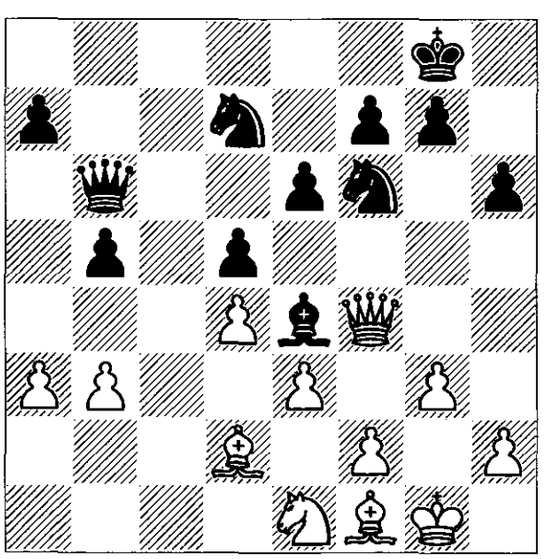

Choose between 26 ♗b4 and 26 g4.

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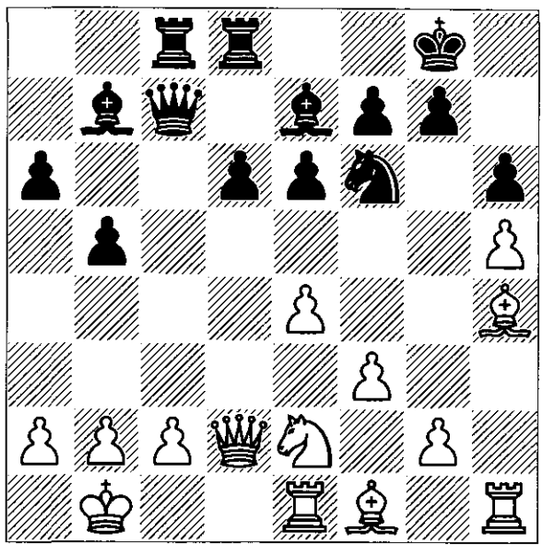

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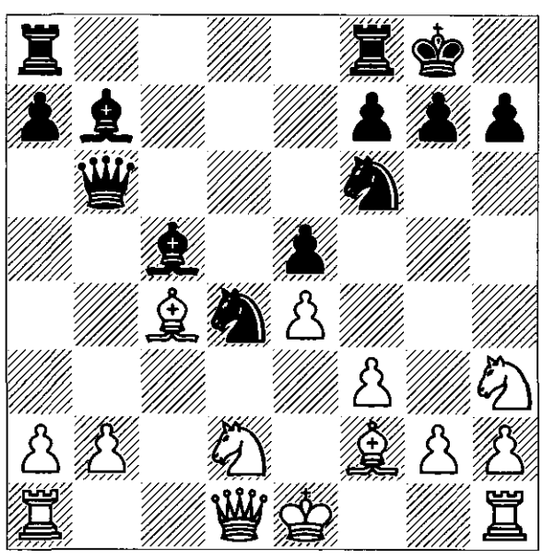

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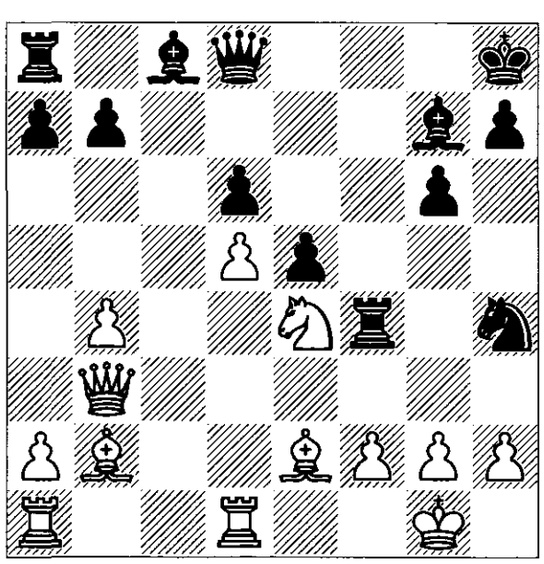

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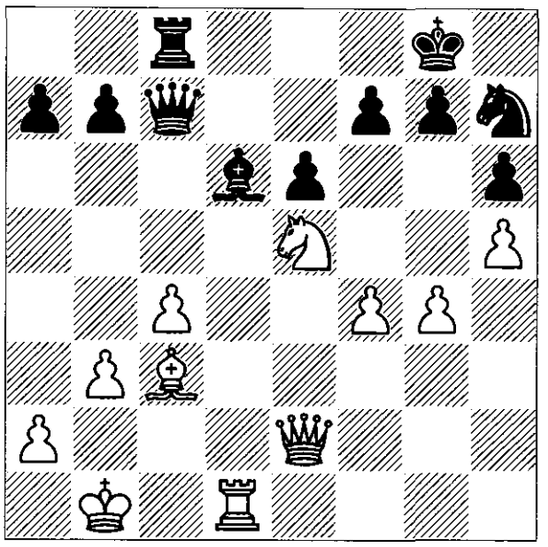

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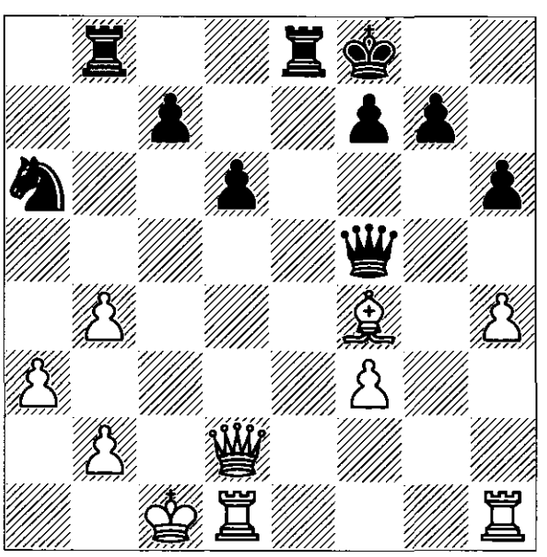

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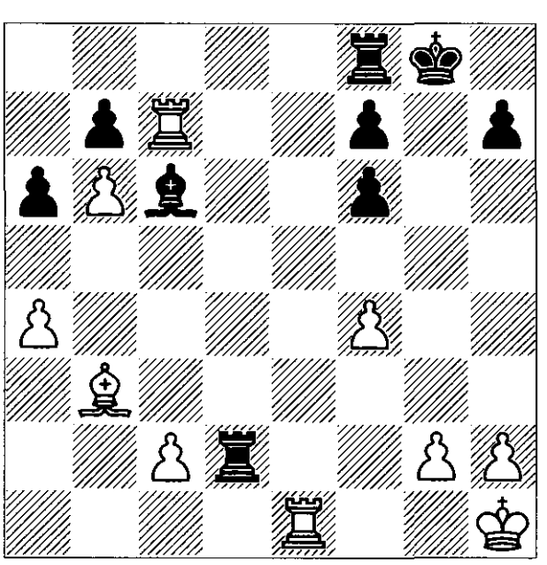


6 Simplification

As we have seen in previous chapters – and will see in this one in a little more depth – when one side has a space disadvantage or is under strong pressure, one resource to consider is that of simplification. With a reduction in the number of pieces, the defensive task generally becomes less burdensome, and opportunities for counterattack may also appear.

Nevertheless, sometimes simplification is not enough to take the sting out of the opponent's attack or initiative and it is then necessary to make small material concessions. In exchange for them one has to get compensation somehow, such as greater piece activity or control of an important line. If the position has deteriorated further, one might try to reach an inferior but tenable ending or, in the worst-case scenario, at least to get practical chances of saving the game.

This defensive resource is not limited to the middlegame, nor to the endgame: there are openings such as the Marshall Attack or the Benko Gambit in which Black switches to counterattack, giving up a pawn in the opening. The motivation is very different: in the Marshall Black manages to weaken White's king's position, whereas the idea in the Benko is to put White's queenside under pressure.

If there is a master whose name is associated with the art of simplification, it is that of the third World Champion, the Cuban Jose Raul Capablanca. Although his skill is more associated with the simplification that transforms one kind of advantage into another, he was also a master in the handling of the endgame, for which he had to master the art of simplification in all situations.

Let's see a classical example where simplification, and the failure to simplify, was one of the main themes.

Supplementary Game 24.1

Aron Nimzowitsch – Jose Raul Capablanca

New York 1927

Queen's Gambit

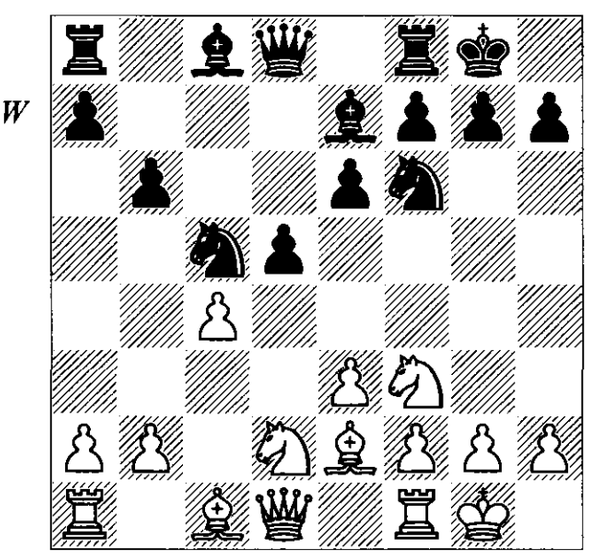
1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 d5 4 e3 ♗e7 5 ♘bd2 0-0 6 ♗d3 c5!

Capablanca pointed out that preventing e4 puts into question the arrangement of the white pieces.

7 dxc5 ♘a6!

Developing a piece, with the prospect of winning another tempo by 8...♘xc5, attacking the d3-bishop.

8 0-0 ♘xc5 9 ♗e2 b6 *(D)*



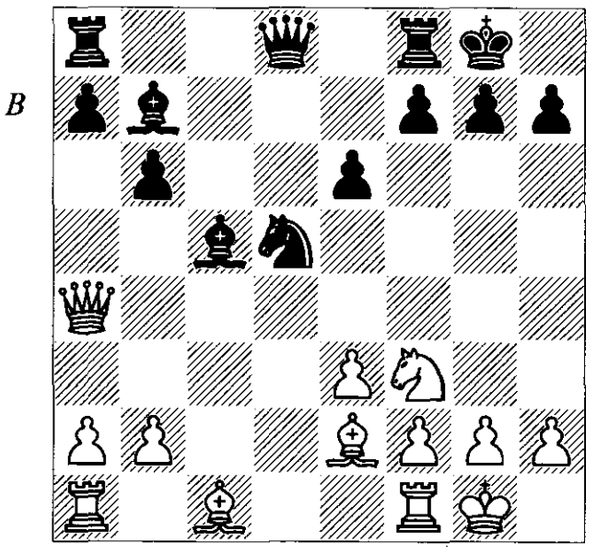
10 cxd5

White begins a plan of exchanging as many pieces as possible to combat Black's lead in

development. However, after this exchange the f6-knight becomes active.

The alternative was 10 b3, solving at once White's main problem, namely the c1-bishop's lack of activity.

10...♘xd5 11 ♘b3 ♗b7 12 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 13 ♕a4 *(D)*



Continuing with the idea of simplifying, this move prepares to exchange the light-squared bishops by ♗a6.

13...♕f6

Black could have foiled White's plan with 13...a5 but he raises no objections to the exchange of bishops because in return he will win time for his development. Black develops his major pieces quickly, trying simultaneously to delay the development of the c1-bishop.

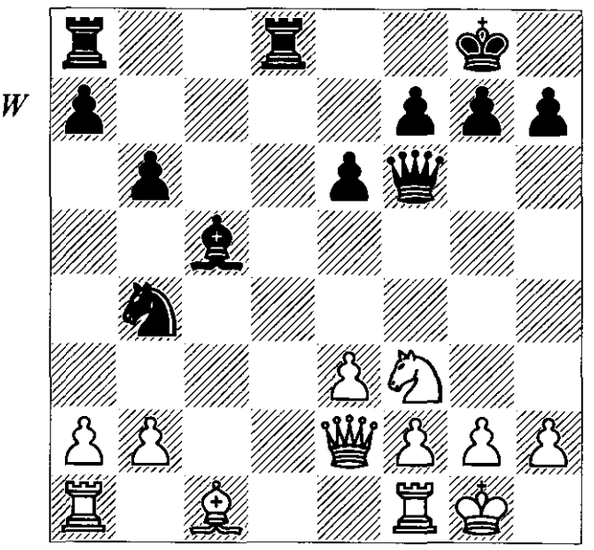
14 ♗a6 ♗xa6 15 ♕xa6 ♘b4 16 ♕e2 ♖fd8 *(D)*

"Black keeps on developing his pieces in the most logical way. Outside of the 7th move, there is not a single move of Black's that is not simple and logical. Anyone playing over the game would think that he would have done the same had he been playing the black pieces." (Capablanca).

The world champion's opinion of the ability of his readers was either very high or very kind, don't you think?

17 a3

This leads to a new simplification, and also to Black 'playing twice in a row'. In the course of the next few moves it is as though after 16...♖fd8 Black had played 19...♖ac8, the other



moves by both sides being significant only with respect to simplification, not development.

The b4-knight attacked the a2-pawn, so in order to play ♖b1 it was necessary to move the a-pawn.

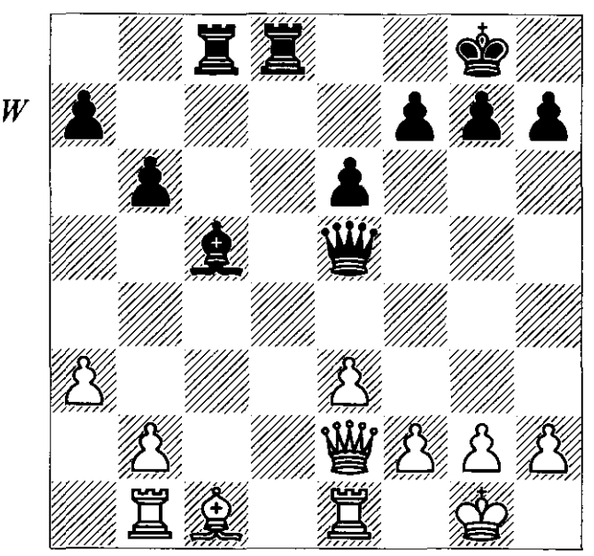
17...♘d3 18 ♘e1

Of course Black's d3-knight is too annoying a guest for White to allow it to prolong its stay.

18...♘xe1 19 ♖xe1 ♖ac8 20 ♖b1

White is ready to play b4 and ♗b2. Black has made the most of his position regarding development and already has all his pieces in play, so we enter a critical situation where the calculation of moves is vital. The next few moves will decide whether Black's slight edge can be increased or is neutralized.

20...♕e5! *(D)*



Capablanca explained that the next stage in his plan is to occupy the seventh rank with one

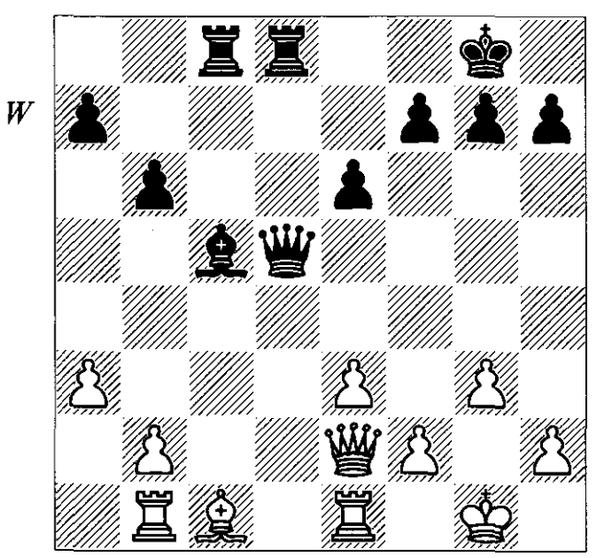
of his rooks. In order to do that, tactics help him to bring the queen to the centre of the struggle.

21 g3

Black's idea was to prevent 21 b4?, after which there would follow 21...♗d6 22 g3 ♕e4, when Black achieves his goal of invading the seventh rank; e.g., 23 ♖b2 ♗e5 24 ♖d2 ♖xd2 25 ♗xd2 ♗b2 26 a4 ♖c2, as indicated by Capablanca.

Developing the c1-bishop by 21 ♗d2 wasn't better. This would also be punished by occupying the seventh with 21...♗d6 22 g3 ♖c2 23 ♕d3 ♖xb2 24 ♗c3 ♖xb1! 25 ♗xe5 ♖xe1+ 26 ♔g2 and now 26...♗e7, or 26...♖c1 27 ♗xd6 ♖c6, when the two rooks are much superior to the white queen.

21...♕d5! *(D)*



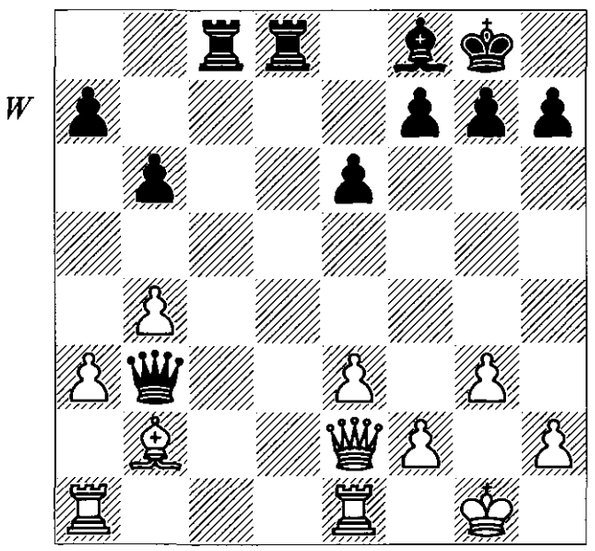
The queen has managed to get closer to the centre of the struggle, where it creates more problems for White, but who still has enough resources to be close to equality.

22 b4 ♗f8 23 ♗b2 ♕a2 24 ♖a1?

White missed his first chance to get a balanced game by seeking the exchange of Black's powerful rooks. It was necessary to calculate accurately because White is on the edge of the abyss.

Alekhine suggested the simplification 24 ♖bd1!, which is sufficient to reach equality; for example, 24...♖xd1 (no better is 24...a5 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 26 ♗d4!) 25 ♖xd1 a5 26 bxa5 bxa5 (not 26...♗xa3? 27 ♕a6!, and White wins material), and here 27 ♕a6? ♖c2 28 ♖d8 doesn't work due to 28...♕b1+! 29 ♔g2 ♕xb2 30 ♕d6 ♖xf2+ 31 ♔h3 ♖xh2+ with a quick mate. The right way is 27 ♖d2! ♗xa3 28 ♕a6 ♖f8 (if 28...♖b8, then 29 ♕xa5! equalizes) 29 ♕xa5 ♕b1+ 30 ♔g2 ♗xb2 31 ♕b4, winning back the piece.

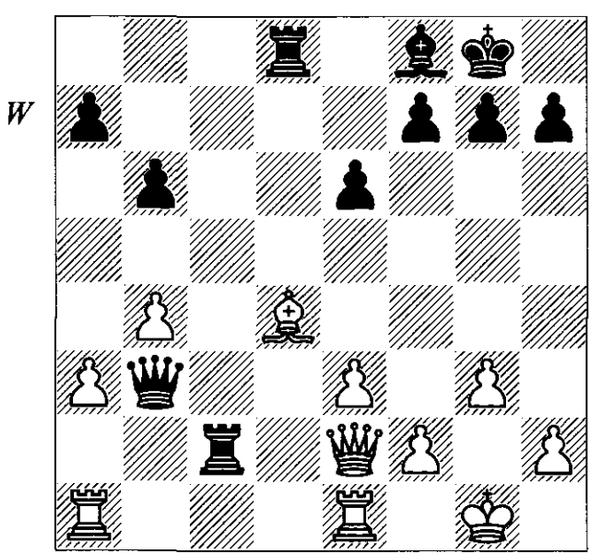
24...♕b3 *(D)*



25 ♗d4?

Here Nimzowitsch still doesn't take measures to simplify, exchanging the rooks and preventing Black's major pieces from winning even more space. Better was 25 ♖ac1!, stopping Black's next move, although he could still keep the tension with 25...a5.

25...♖c2 *(D)*



Black on the other hand keeps acting consistently – he has occupied the seventh rank.

26 ♕a6?

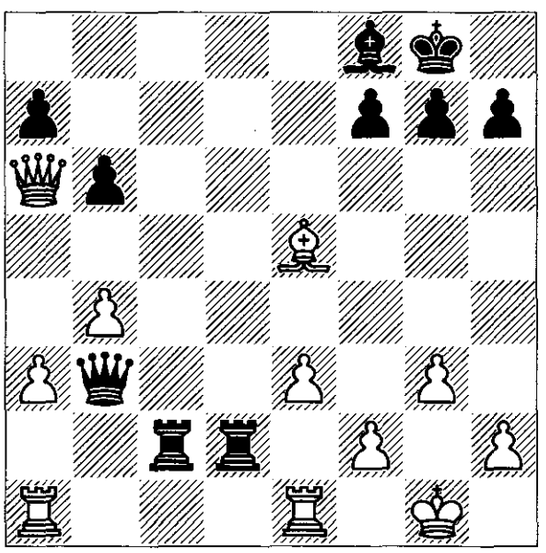
The third consecutive questionable move is already the decisive mistake. White is not ready

yet to counterattack. It was necessary to keep the queen for the defence with 26 ♕f1 or 26 ♕d1 (when White needn't fear 26...e5? due to the elegant 27 ♖e2!, winning a pawn).

26...e5!

After this beautiful pawn sacrifice Black's three major pieces will gain maximum activity.

27 ♗xe5 ♖dd2 *(D)*



28 ♕b7

After the defence 28 ♖f1 there follows the splendid sacrifice 28...♕xe3!, when the queen is immune because of the mate in three moves, and if 29 ♗f4, Black keeps offering his queen by 29...♖xf2!, with a quick mate.

28 ♕f1 is no longer a sufficient defence because the black queen joins in the attack by means of the manoeuvre 28...♕d5 29 ♗d4 ♕h5! (threatening 30...♖xf2!, which forces White to weaken his king's pawn-cover) 30 h4 ♕f3, and the king's position cannot be defended.

28...♖xf2

The rest is nice and simple.

29 g4 ♕e6 30 ♗g3 ♖xh2! 31 ♕f3

If 31 ♗xh2, Black plays 31...♕xg4+ followed by 32...♕h3 and mate.

31...♖hg2+ 32 ♕xg2 ♖xg2+ 33 ♔xg2 ♕xg4 34 ♖ad1 h5 35 ♖d4 ♕g5 36 ♔h2 a5 37 ♖e2 axb4 38 axb4 ♗e7 39 ♖e4 ♗f6 40 ♖f2 ♕d5 41 ♖e8+ ♔h7 0-1

Continuing with Capablanca, the next game is a relatively simple example of a defensive sacrifice.

Game 24

Frank James Marshall – Jose Raul Capablanca

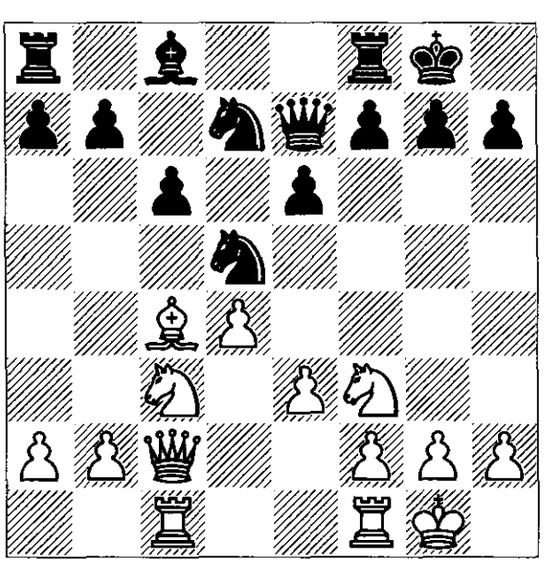
New York 1918

Queen's Gambit Declined, Orthodox

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♘bd7 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♖c1 c6 8 ♕c2 dxc4

This capture, followed by ...♘d5, is known as Capablanca's Freeing Manoeuvre. Black thus attains a freer game by exchanging some pieces, although it is more usual to play it after 8 ♗d3. In this position the main continuation is to proceed with 'the fight for the tempo', that is, to keep making useful moves waiting for White to play ♗d3 before taking on c4; e.g., 8...♖e8 or 8...a6. Another possibility is 8...♘e4, related to the idea of another great champion, Emanuel Lasker (the standard Lasker Defence features ...♘e4 without ...c6 or ...♘bd7, and normally with ...h6 ♗h4 inserted).

9 ♗xc4 ♘d5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 0-0 *(D)*



Black has an obvious problem – the inactivity of the c8-bishop. In the analogous line after

8 ♗d3, Black generally follows with ...♘xc3 and the break ...e5. Here this is not possible because White retakes with the queen on c3 and so prevents ...e5.

The c8-bishop will have to be developed on the long diagonal – this isn't a bad idea, so is then 11...b6 acceptable? From the previous chapter we already know that one shouldn't play without taking into consideration what the opponent can reply.

Capablanca-Vidmar, London 1922 showed that 11...b6 isn't good. The game went 12 ♘xd5! cxd5 (Black is forced to open the c-file, where White is already strong; if 12...exd5?, there follows 13 ♗d3 with a double attack) 13 ♗d3 h6 (Black avoids 13...♘f6 to deny White the possibility of ♘e5) 14 ♕c7! (Capablanca momentarily stops Black's development with this pin) 14...♕b4 *(D)* (Black unpins with gain of time by attacking the b2-pawn).

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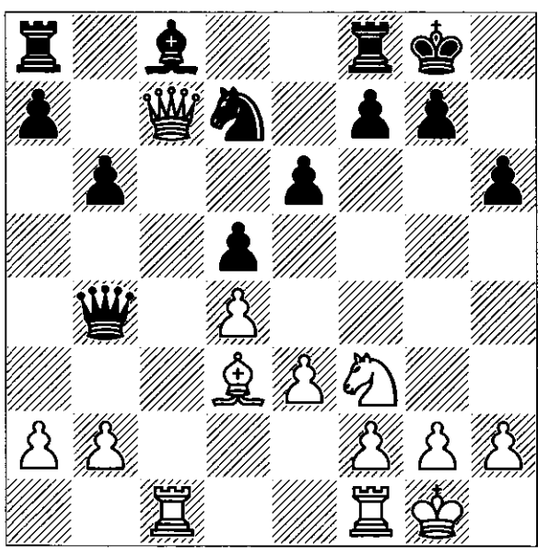

15 a3!! (an elegant sacrifice of two pawns that Vidmar after a thirty-minute reflection did not accept; in the event of 15 b3? Black would play 15...♘f6, followed by 16...♕a3 and 17...♗a6; a better move for White is 15 ♖c2, since the same manoeuvre by Black is then less effective due to the fact that the black queen is less safe on a5 or a4 than on a3; nevertheless White's dynamic advantage is such that he can play more actively) 15...♕a4 (if 15...♕xb2, then 16 ♖b1! ♕xa3 17 ♗b5! ♕e7 {or 17...♘f6 18 ♖a1 ♕b2 19 ♖fb1, winning} 18 ♗c6 ♖b8 19 ♘e5, and the pin is decisive; for instance, 19...♖d8! 20 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 21 ♘c6) 16 h3 ♘f6 17 ♘e5 ♗d7 (17...♗a6 loses to 18 b3! ♕a5 19 ♘c6 ♕xa3 20 ♖a1) 18 ♗c2 ♕b5 19 a4 ♕xb2, and here Capablanca played 20 ♘xd7 ♖ac8 21 ♕b7 ♘xd7 22 ♗h7+!, winning the exchange and later on the game, although he himself pointed out that 20 ♖b1 was even stronger, winning a piece; e.g., 20...♕a3 21 ♘xd7 ♖ac8 22 ♘xf6+ gxf6 23 ♕g3+.

11...♘xc3!

This is the right move-order to implement the idea.

12 ♕xc3 b6 13 e4 ♗b7 14 ♖fe1 ♖fd8

For a brief description of the immediate future, let's hear what Capablanca had to say: "The opening is over and the middlegame begins. White, as is generally the case, has obtained the centre. Black, on the other hand, is entrenched in his first three ranks, and if given time will post his queen's rook at c8 and his knight at f6, and finally play ...c5, in order to break up White's centre and give full action to the black bishop posted at b7. In this game White attempts to anticipate that plan by initiating an advance in the centre which, when carefully analysed, is truly an attack against Black's e-pawn."

15 d5 *(D)*

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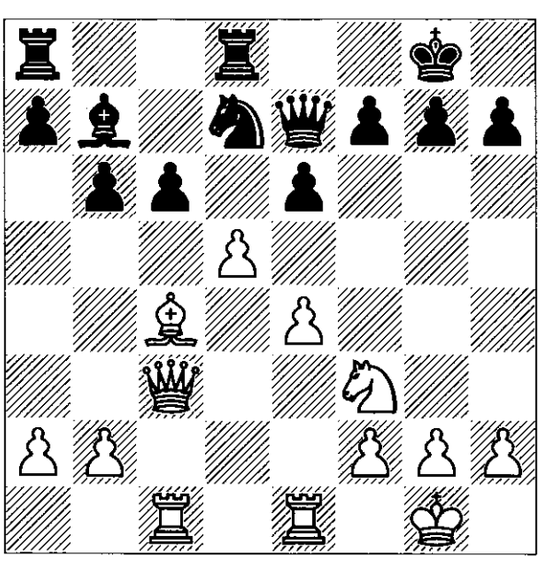


White is trying to open up lines to make the most of his better-developed pieces. In a previous round against Kostić, Capablanca had continued 15...♘f8.

15...♘c5!

A clear improvement. Instead of the passive retreat, Black occupies a square abandoned by

White, and threatens 16...cxd5 and 16...♘xe4, followed by 17...cxd5.

16 dxe6 ♘xe6 17 ♗xe6

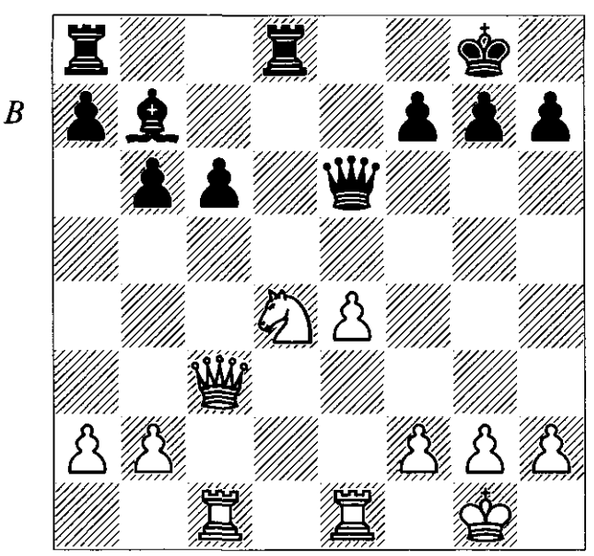
This exchange took Capablanca by surprise. White gets rid of his strong bishop seemingly without any major compensation.

17...♕xe6

Underestimating White's idea, Black attacks the a2-pawn. If White defends it, there would follow 18...c5, and the now-strong b7-bishop would give Black the advantage.

17...fxe6 was suggested but clearly it isn't pleasant to create three pawn-islands. White would prevent 18...c5 by playing 18 b4!, and after 18...♖ac8 19 ♕b3 he is somewhat better because ...c5 would almost certainly lead to a weaker structure. Black would have to see whether the activity of the b7-bishop is enough compensation.

18 ♘d4! *(D)*



A surprise. Of course 18...♕xa2?? would now be met by 19 ♖a1, winning the queen. Now the queen and the c6-pawn are under attack – what is the best defence?

18...♕e5!

An excellent pawn sacrifice, and virtually the only way to defend.

As indicated by Capablanca, the seemingly forced 18...♕d7?, defending the c6-pawn, would be met by 19 ♘f5 f6 20 ♕g3 (threatening to win the queen by 21 ♖cd1) 20...♔h8 21 ♖cd1 ♕f7 22 h4, and White has a big advantage. The black king is weak, and so is the d6-square, which is useful for playing ♘d6, for instance, at the appropriate time, and doubling rooks on the d-file, thus increasing White's dynamism due to his advantage in mobility.

19 ♘xc6 ♕xc3 20 ♖xc3 ♖d2

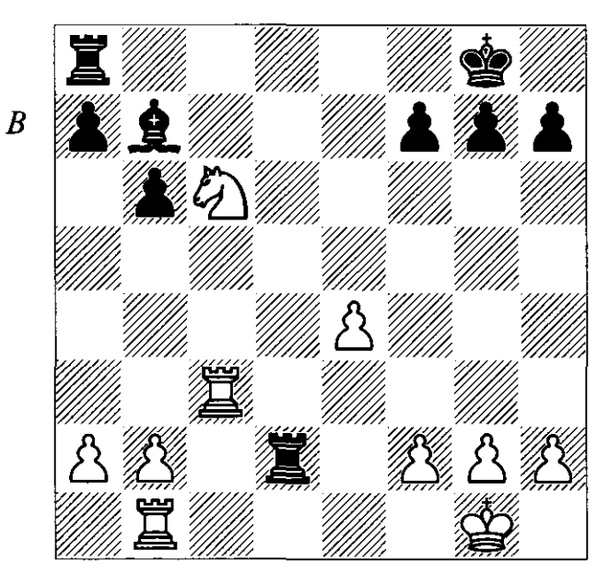
Black has managed to get reasonable compensation for the pawn – he occupies the seventh rank. Also the disappearance of the c6-pawn gave the b7-bishop much-needed freedom. This counterplay is enough to balance the game.

21 ♖b1? *(D)*

The choice of this passive defence shows that White still has ambitions to hold on to a clear material plus. The black pieces, however, become too active and the extra pawn will be worthless.

Perhaps one of the reasons for White's optimism was that the a8-rook cannot occupy the d-file so he is in no immediate danger.

White should have played 21 ♘e7+ ♔f8 22 ♖c7 ♖e8 (or the more ambitious 22...♗xe4 23 f3 ♗c2; e.g., 24 ♘c6 ♗f5 25 ♖ee7 ♗e6) 23 ♖xb7 (23 ♘g6+? is worse due to 23...fxg6!, vacating the f7-square for the king so that he can meet 24 ♖xb7 with 24...♖xe4!, without fearing 25 ♖b8+) 23...♖xe7 24 ♖b8+ ♖e8 25 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8, with a balanced endgame. Despite being a pawn down, Black is not worse due to his dynamic superiority, which in rook endgames is even more important than in general.



21...♖e8!

A strong way to bring the unmoved rook into play.

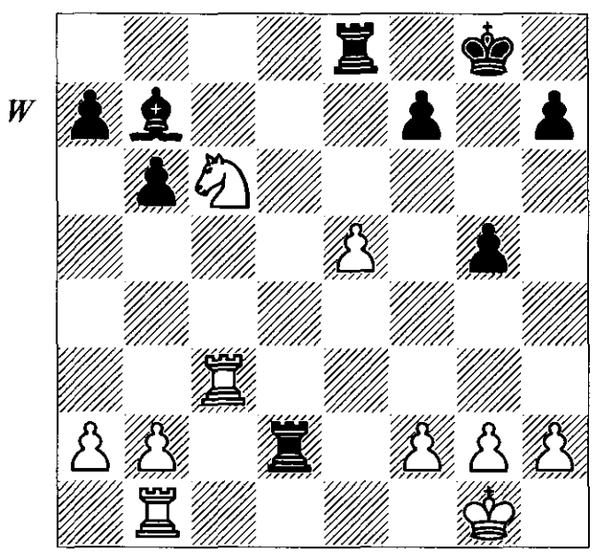
22 e5

A difficult decision, which might give the b7-bishop more prospects if the c6-knight moves. This jeopardizes White's defence.

If 22 f3, Black provides some *luft* for his king with 22...f5!. Perhaps – it would be better with a computer at hand – the best thing was to capture another pawn with 22 ♘xa7 and pray for Black's activity not to be decisive.

22...g5! *(D)*

This way to create *luft* is now best because it prevents f4, thus effectively isolating the e5-pawn.



23 h4

Sacrificing an unimportant pawn in order to support the more important one on e5.

23 ♘xa7 is worse now than before since there would follow 23...♖xe5.

23...gxh4

Indeed, the pawn offered was not important but the targets it left exposed are. Black plans 24...♖e6, followed by a timely ...♖g6 and ...h3-h2, when the doubled pawns on the h-file are in fact a formidable attacking force.

24 ♖e1

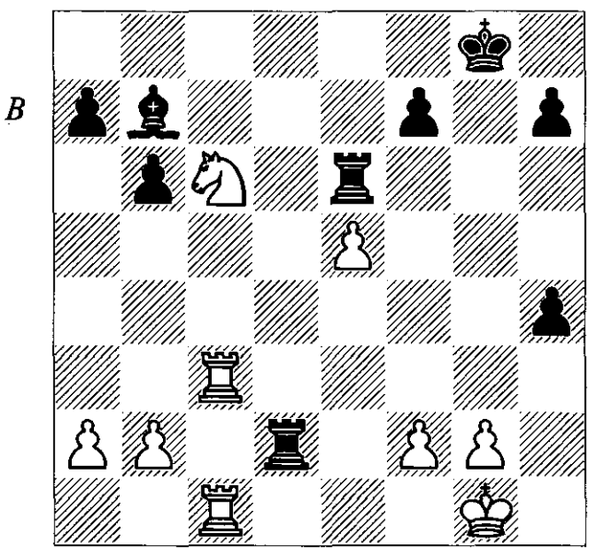
By giving up the queenside pawns to deflect the black pieces, White tries to become active on the kingside.

24...♖e6!

Increasing the activity of the pieces is much better than capturing pawns. Black now threatens the c6-knight and also 25...♖g6.

A curious line after 24...♖xb2?!, which would prove White right, is 25 ♘xa7 ♖a8 26 ♖c7 ♖xa7 27 e6! fxe6 28 ♖xe6, when Black, despite being a piece up, must settle for a draw.

25 ♖ec1 *(D)*



25...♔g7!

Black steps out of the possible check on e7 and prepares ...♖g6, with a virtually decisive attack thanks to the direct action of the rooks and the doubled h4-pawn, and to the indirect influence of the b7-bishop, thus paralysing White's play.

26 b4 b5!

It is possible to capture the e5-pawn after 26...♗xc6 but there's no hurry. White is tied to the defence of the c6-knight, and the text-move prevents 27 b5, which would free the white rooks.

27 a3 ♖g6 28 ♔f1 ♖a2!

"Notice the remarkable position of the pieces. White cannot move anything without incurring some loss." (Capablanca).

29 ♔g1?!

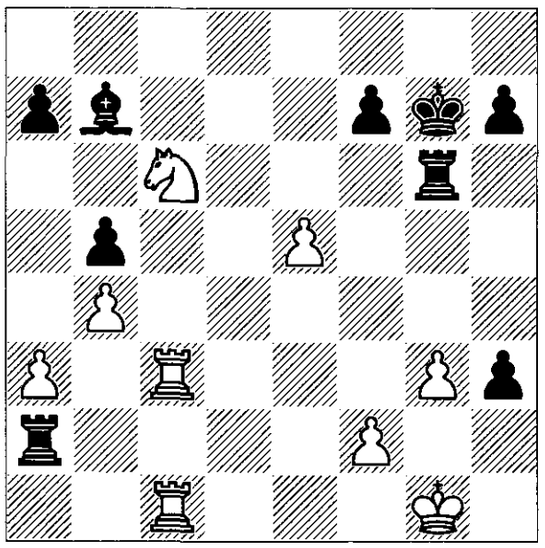
29 e6 is more resilient, although as Capablanca points out it wouldn't have saved the game either, merely prolonged it. If 29...♖xe6, there follows 30 ♘d8, getting rid of the nightmare the b7-bishop had become. Black would probably have replied 29...fxe6 because after 30 ♘e5 his attack breaks through following 30...♖xg2 31 ♖c7+ ♔f6.

29...h3 30 g3 *(D)*

30...a6!

Again Black is in no hurry – White is practically in zugzwang.

31 e6 ♖xe6 32 g4


B

The difference from the previous sacrifice, 29 e6, is that now any knight move runs into a forced mate by 32...h2+ 33 ♔xh2 ♖h6+ 34 ♔g1 ♖h1#.

32...♖h6 33 f3

After 33 g5 h2+ 34 ♔h1 ♖xc6 35 ♖xc6 ♖xf2 Black wins easily.

33...♖d6

With the second rook getting to the seventh rank, Black ends all resistance.

34 ♘e7 ♖dd2 35 ♘f5+ ♔f6 36 ♘h4 ♔e5 37 ♘f5 ♖g2+ 38 ♔f1 h2 39 f4+ ♔xf4 0-1

A key moment of the game arose after 18 ♘d4!, when a superficial reply such as 18...♕d7? would have put Black's position in serious danger. The sacrifice 18...♕e5! gave him good compensation for the pawn. White didn't realize the danger and after the passive 21 ♖b1? his position gradually got worse. The way in which Black made the most of his activity is to be admired: 21...♖e8!, 22...g5!, 24...♖e6!, 25...♔g7! and the patient 26...b5!, 28...♖a2! and 30...a6!, leaving White in zugzwang.

One of the main virtues of Black's play in our next example was realizing when the critical moment had come to define the pawn-structure, in this case by simplifying, and its crucial importance in the rest of the game.

Game 25

Arthur Bisguier – Pal Benko

Zonal playoff match (game 4), New York 1964

Caro-Kann Defence, Classical Variation

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♗f5 5 ♘g3 ♗g6 6 ♘f3 ♘d7 7 ♗d3

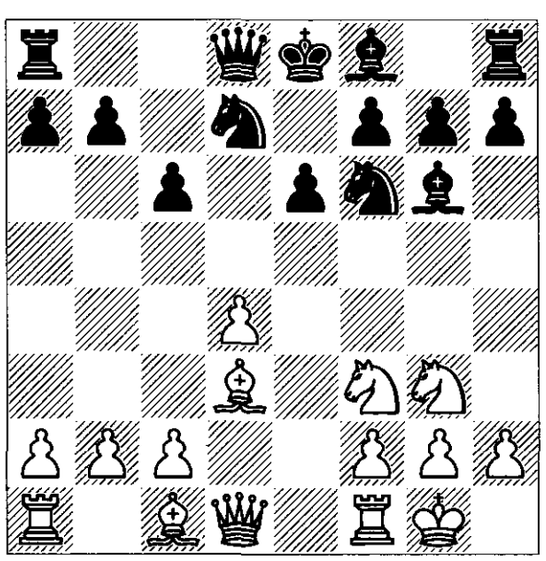
White prefers to play in a quiet way. The most used continuation is 7 h4. Although experts like Larsen and Seirawan consider that the advance h4 and h5 weakens White's position, few masters share that opinion.

7...e6 8 0-0 ♘gf6 *(D)*

9 ♖e1

There are several moves to choose from, such as this logical occupation of the half-open file. Also 9 ♗f4 and 9 c4, both useful, can be made in different move-orders.

9 ♗xg6 is a compromising decision. True, Black's structure is damaged, but given that Black hasn't castled yet, opening the h-file is not to be recommended. After 9...hxg6 Black could follow with 10...♕c7, then ...♗d6 and ...0-0-0, making the most of that file.


W

9...♗e7 10 c4 ♗xd3

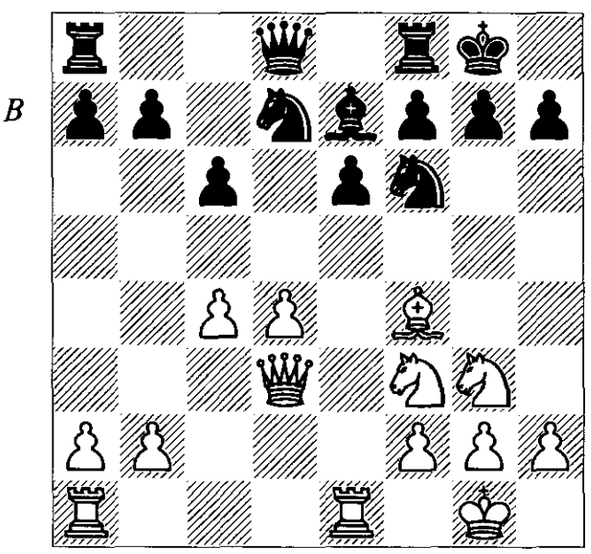
Before castling kingside, Black rules out the exchange of the bishops on g6, for if 10...0-0?!, the open h-file wouldn't be relevant after 11 ♗xg6, and there is no reason to allow the

worsening of the pawn-structure. Perhaps it is not a serious defect but what is clear is that it doesn't achieve anything from Black's viewpoint.

11 ♕xd3 0-0

Another possibility, more consistent with prophylactic thinking, was the useful move 11...♕c7, preventing the game continuation. Then Black could castle next move. However, it is also true that White could have played ♗f4 earlier.

12 ♗f4 *(D)*



Now Black has run out of natural moves. How should he play? 12...♖e8 would be a reasonable option. Is there something more ambitious?

12...♕a5!

"A Machiavellian move, trying to weaken White's queenside" commented Benko. Black provokes White's expansion on the queenside, reckoning that he can counterattack successfully.

13 a3

White defends his pawn and prepares b4, gaining both space and time. It remains to be seen whether White has the capability to support the advanced structure.

13 ♘f5? was wrong due to 13...♗b4!.

13...♖fe8

Black now had to defend against the knight jump.

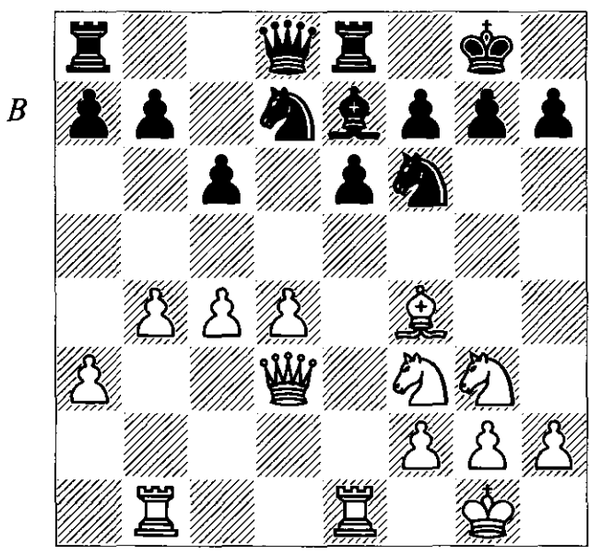
14 b4

What is the most useful square for the queen? The right answer is to take into consideration a plan of action for Black, not just an isolated move.

14...♕d8!

Black accepts the loss of two tempi, but as we shall see this is the best way for Black to be able to counterattack strongly.

15 ♖ab1 *(D)*



15...a5!

Of course – this was what Black was counting on. He cannot allow White to make progress unhindered and consolidate his space advantage. By this blow he tries to show that White's advance with a3 and b4 also has drawbacks.

It is notable that this move is effective even with the hindrance that the b1-rook seems to exert.

Put yourself now in White's shoes – how would you reply to this counterattack?

16 b5?!

This natural advance will be duly punished. 16 bxa5 ♖xa5 17 ♖xb7? was not possible either due to 17...♘c5!, winning the exchange. This is an important detail in support of 15...a5!.

The advance 16 c5! was worth considering, as in some positions from the Slav Defence, Semi-Slav, or even the Catalan Opening. In this case it was the best option – in exchange for conceding the d5-square, White consolidates his structure and his spatial preponderance.

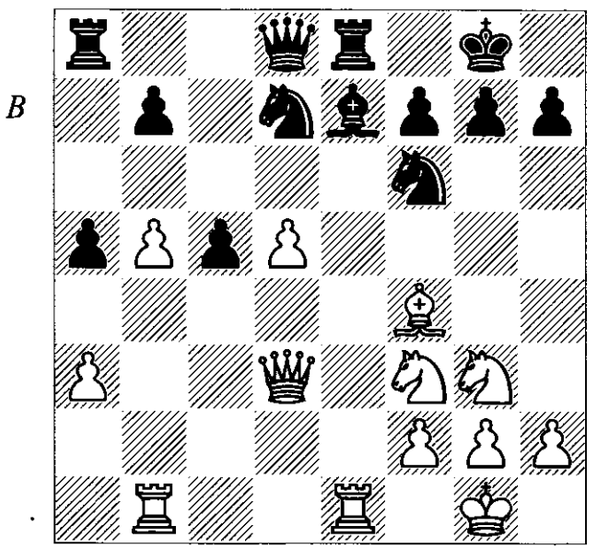
16...c5!

Another move that cannot be made without having a specific answer ready against the advance that follows.

17 d5

Creating a passed pawn – nothing could be more attractive but in view of the fact that Black has a good reply ready, it was worth considering supporting the centre with a rook move.

17...exd5 18 cxd5 *(D)*



White has more space and he also has obtained a passed pawn. True, Black has almost provoked this, so how is he to neutralize White's advantages and justify his previous play?

18...c4!

The key to Black's counterattack, showing that white centre has lost its strength. Any other move would be wrong because it would allow White to consolidate the d5-pawn – White's space advantage would then become serious.

19 ♕xc4 ♘b6!

Of course "one should not choose the wrong enemy" – the one Black has to neutralize is the passed pawn on d5.

Instead 19...♗xa3?! is inconsistent, capturing an unimportant pawn while leaving the dangerous one alive.

20 ♕d4 ♘bxd5 21 ♗c1?!

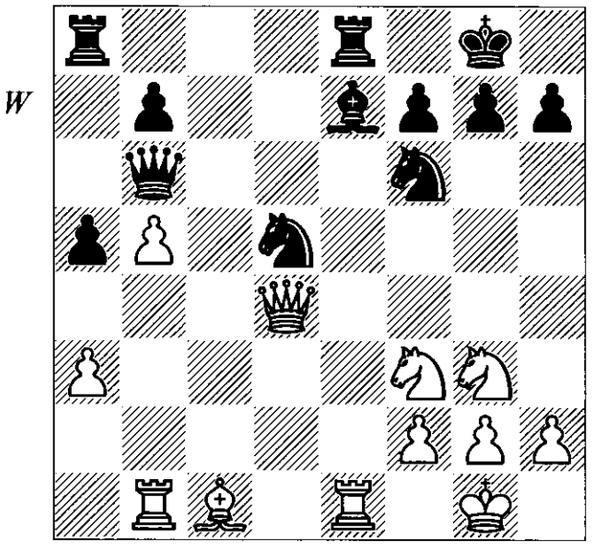
This retreat is very passive. 21 a4 does leave the b4-square without control, but was preferable.

21...♕b6! *(D)*

The threat is 22...♗c5. With the exchange of queens the white weaknesses created by the advanced queenside will be felt.

22 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 23 ♘f5 ♗f8

The best square for the bishop; from here it targets the queenside and prepares the jumps of the b6-knight.

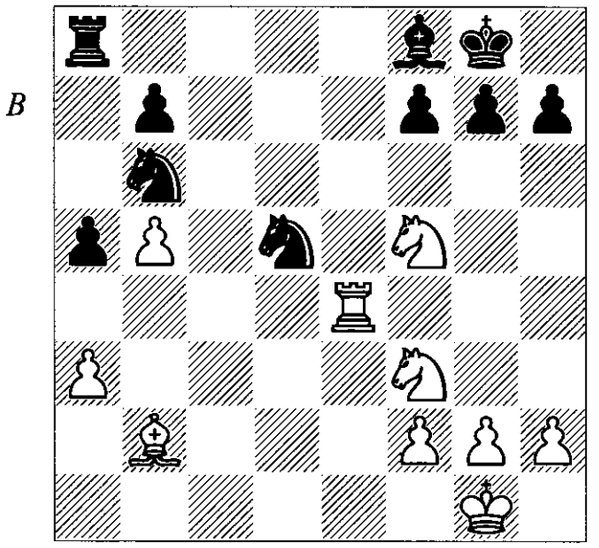


Instead, the more 'active' 23...♗c5 allows 24 ♗e3!, exchanging the passive c1-bishop for the now annoying c5-bishop.

24 ♗b2 ♖xe1+ 25 ♖xe1 ♘fd5

"Suddenly White is having trouble holding the balance due to the weaknesses on a4, a3, b5 and c4" (Benko). The threat is 26...♘c4.

26 ♖e4 *(D)*



White has prevented the knight jump. How should Black proceed? At first sight the two main possibilities to consider are to drive away the f5-knight with 26...g6 or, if the knight is not an annoyance, to occupy the open file with 26...♖c8. Which is better?

26...g6!

The answer, as always, must take into consideration what White is planning, and how he can reply.

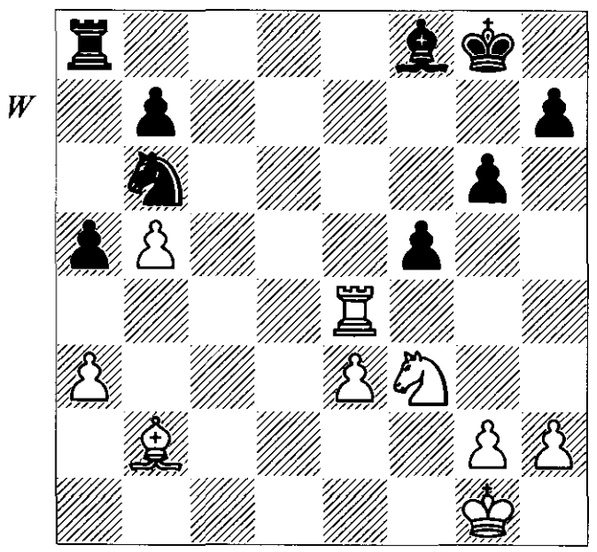
Black chooses the most active option. Also good was 26...f6, although it was not so sharp.

Instead, 26...♖c8?! is not useful due to the fact that 26 ♖e4 contained a threat: there would follow 27 ♘h6+! gxh6 (worse is 27...♔h8 28 ♘g5) 28 ♖g4+ ♗g7 29 ♖xg7+ ♔f8, and White is back in the game – by spoiling Black's pawn-structure he may even end up with some advantage.

27 ♘e3 ♘xe3 28 fxe3

Of course if 28 ♖xe3?, there would follow 28...♘c4, winning a pawn.

28...f5 *(D)*



Forcing White to make up his mind about the rook – he must choose between leaving it on the e-file or on the fourth rank.

29 ♖e6

29 ♖h4 controls the fourth rank, as well as the jumps of the black knight, but leaves the rook out of play. There would follow the line pointed out by Benko: 29...♖c8 30 ♗d4 ♘d5 31 a4 ♗e7 32 ♖h3 ♖c4, winning.

29...♘c4

Of course – this jump is the one White wanted to prevent with 29 ♖h4.

30 ♗d4 ♗xa3 31 h4 *(D)*

White seeks counterplay by opening up lines against the black king, although without queens it is not the same thing.

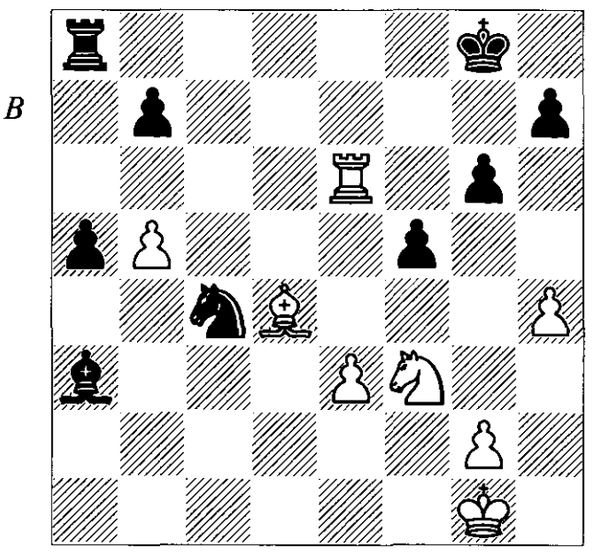
31...a4

The black king is able to defend itself, and 'passed pawns must be pushed'.

32 h5 gxh5 33 ♘e5 ♘xe5 34 ♖xe5

White has managed to activate his rook with some threats on the kingside.

34...♗f8!



The priority is the advance of the passed pawn – the kingside pawns are much less important.

35 ♖xf5 a3 36 ♖g5+ ♔f7 37 ♖xh5

Material is equal but the a3-pawn gives Black a huge advantage.

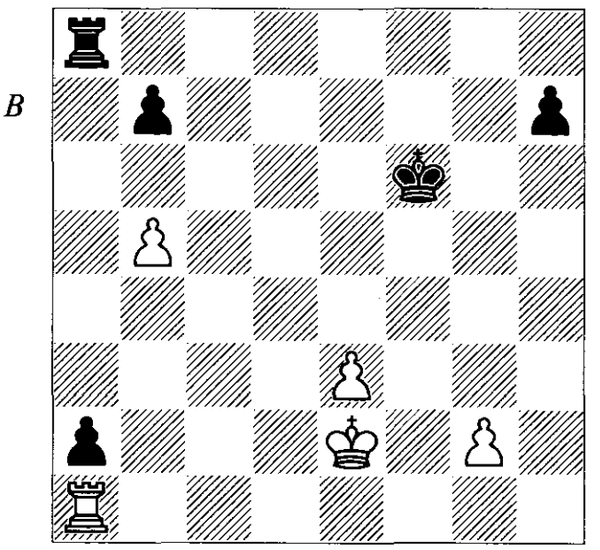
37...♔g6 38 ♖h1 a2

Victory is a question of technique – equally strong was 38...♖a5, and if 39 b6, then 39...♖h5, exchanging the rooks and winning easily.

39 ♔f2 ♗g7

With the exchange of bishops the difference in activity between the two remaining pieces becomes even more apparent.

40 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 41 ♖a1 ♔f6 42 ♔e2 *(D)*



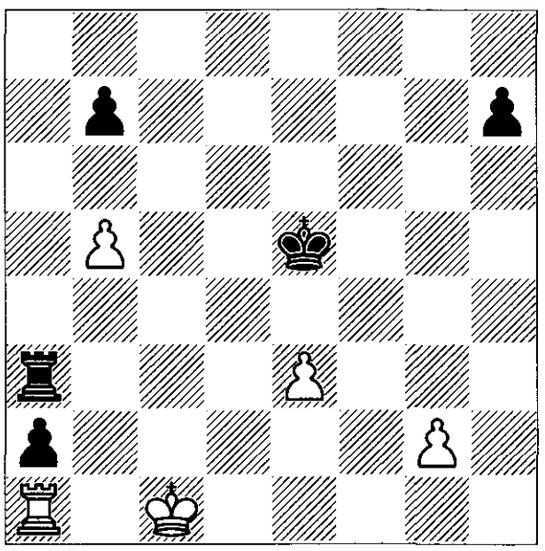
42...♖a3!

Cutting off the white king so that he can manoeuvre freely with his own. Here there were other strong moves, such as the direct 42...♔e5, but it is important to remember the concept of

limiting to the maximum any activity by the opponent.

Made in a more favourable situation, this move bears some resemblance to the 28 ♖a6! played in Rubinstein-Em.Lasker, St Petersburg 1909.

43 ♔d2 ♔e5 44 ♔c1 *(D)*



44...♖a5

Stopping 45 ♔b2 due to 45...♖xb5+ 46 ♔xa2 ♖a5+ 47 ♔b2 ♖xa1 48 ♔xa1 ♔e4, with an easy win.

45 b6 ♖a6

For the same reason as on the previous move. The rest is simple: Black moves at will and puts White in zugzwang.

46 ♔c2 ♔e4 47 ♔d2 h5 48 ♔e2 ♖a3 49 ♔d2 h4 50 ♔c1 ♔xe3 51 ♔b2 ♖a6 52 ♖e1+ ♔f2 0-1

The fact that with 15...a5! White's structure was weakened could only be demonstrated after 18...c4!, followed by 19...♘b6! and the capture of the d5-pawn. With this simplification Black stopped the consolidation of White's space advantage. He also prevented White from keeping his strong passed pawn.

Let's not forget Tarrasch's dictum "the seeds of defeat lie in a cramped position".

Another lesson from the game, different from the main theme we are dealing with, is how useful it is to know different sorts of structures – all knowledge is useful. Sometimes solutions are found that are similar to those from very different openings, as with 16...c5!.

Prophylactic thinking is needed even when ahead and with few pieces on the board. One should not ignore or underestimate the opponent's plans and control the threats – 26...g6!.

Lastly, in any kind of endgame the difference in activity between the kings is a very important factor, which was highlighted with 42...♖a3!.

The exchange of the appropriate pieces had a very important influence on Black's defensive task in the next game.

Game 26

Igor Bondarevsky – Vasily Smyslov

USSR Ch, Moscow 1950

Nimzo-Indian Defence, Rubinstein System

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e3 d5 5 a3 ♗e7

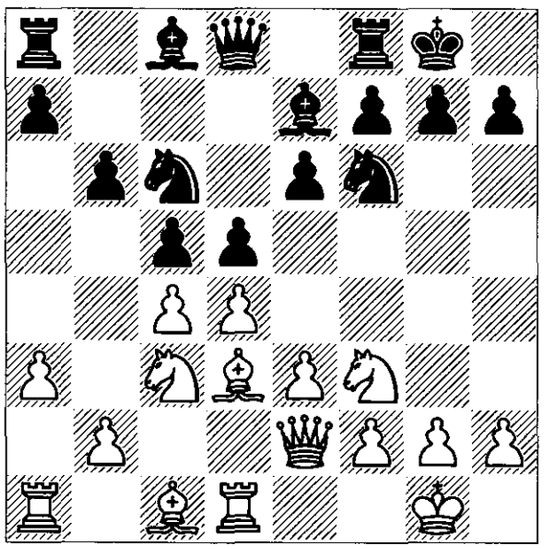
It is true that with this retreat Black loses a tempo but, as we'll see, the tempo won with 5 a3 is not always advantageous.

The alternative is 5...♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 ♘e2, when Black prepares the exchange of the powerful d3-bishop by 9...b6 followed by 10...♗a6. The best-known example is probably Botvinnik-Capablanca, AVRO tournament, Rotterdam 1938.

6 ♘f3 0-0 7 ♗d3 b6 8 0-0 c5 9 ♕e2

White decides to maintain the tension. He could have tried to exploit his lead in development and Black's temporary weakness on the h1-a8 diagonal by 9 cxd5 exd5 10 dxc5 bxc5 11 e4, but Smyslov was ready to reply 11...dxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♗a6!, getting rid of White's fearsome bishop, with equality. Despite Black having a weak pawn on c5, it controls the d4-square, and there is also a white weakness on b2, so they cancel each other out.

9...♘c6 10 ♖d1 *(D)*

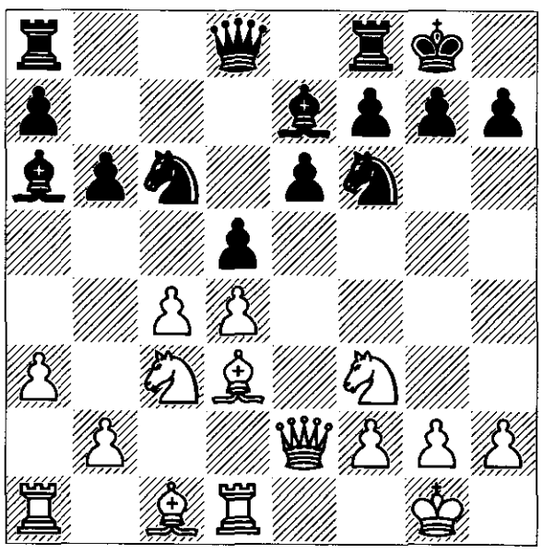


White has more centralized forces. The central tension, together with the pressure on the d-file from the d1-rook towards the black queen, favours him. This means that the opening of the centre with dxc5 and cxd5, followed by e4, must be considered on every move. Black therefore decides to get rid of some of the central tension, removing in part the dangers of the positioning of the white rook and the black queen.

10...cxd4 11 exd4 ♗a6 *(D)*

With the current position of the pieces it is not in Black's favour to create an isolated pawn by 11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 because the break d5 is more than ready, and in good circumstances. In this case having played 5 a3 favours White because after 12...♘a5 he has the retreat 13 ♗a2.

Black finds the positive side of not having developed his c8-bishop yet and by moving it he starts to put pressure on the c4-pawn.



12 b3 ♖c8 13 ♖b1

A move that might seem strange at first sight, but we shall soon see that it is not made altogether willingly. The natural 13 ♗b2?! would be met by 13...♘a5!, and here we find a situation where the tempo 'won' with 5 a3 is not advantageous.

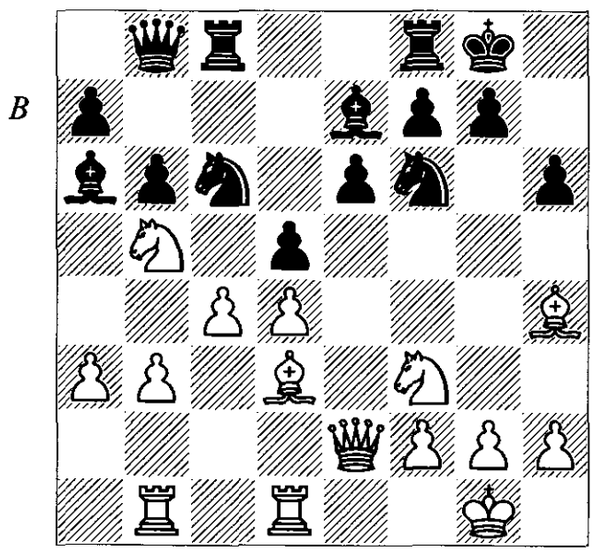
13...♕c7

Black couldn't increase the pressure on c4 with 13...♘a5?! due to 14 c5!, when White's pawn-majority becomes dangerous.

14 ♘b5 ♕b8

Doubling the white pawns with 14...♗xb5 is not advisable because the weakness created on c6 after 15 cxb5 is serious, and besides the c6-knight has no good squares.

15 ♗g5 h6 16 ♗h4 *(D)*



How should Black proceed? If there wasn't anything special, Black could play 16...♖fe8 or 16...♖fd8. However, we know we mustn't limit ourselves to carrying on blindly with our plans – we should ask ourselves what our opponent is planning.

16...♘h5!

With this offer to exchange bishops, the annoying 17 ♗g3 is prevented, although it is also necessary to calculate it accurately because now the position can become complex – there might be piece exchanges and the possibility of *zwischenzugs*.

17 ♗xe7

The complications that had to be calculated were in the line 17 cxd5; for instance, it was possible to play 17...exd5 18 ♗xe7 ♘f4, as

well as 17...♘f4 18 ♕e4 ♘xd3 19 dxc6, when 19...♗xh4?! 20 ♕xd3 seems to give White a clear plus, for it allows him to keep his strong c6-pawn. However, Black has 19...♘xf2!, and after 20 ♗xf2 ♗xb5 21 d5 ♕c7 he gets an acceptable game, for the c6-pawn will fall in a few moves. Needless to say, this is just a sample of the complications.

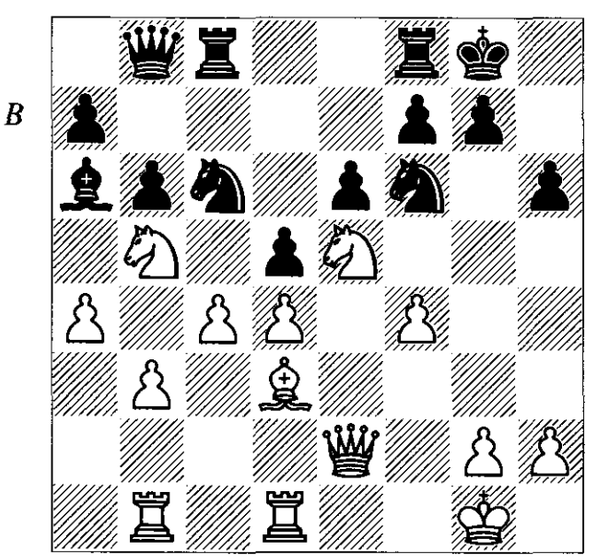
17...♘xe7

The question of who has benefited from the simplification remains – the answer is that no one clearly has. Black's bishop was the stronger in theory but White potentially has the 'hanging pawns' formation, in which generally the exchange of pieces is not welcomed by White because the force of the hanging pawns is most apparent in the middlegame as they control central squares and give space to the pieces for manoeuvring, whereas in the endgame they are weaker.

18 ♘e5 ♘f6 19 a4 ♘c6

Going back to put pressure on the white centre. The threat is 20...♗xb5 followed by 21...♘xd4.

20 f4 *(D)*

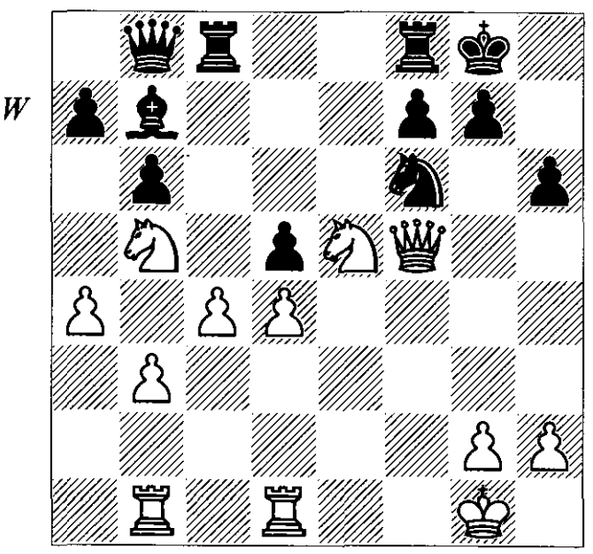


This move is tempting. White launches an attack without being afraid of sacrificing the d-pawn; e.g., 20...♗xb5 21 axb5 ♘xd4 22 ♕f2 dxc4! (if 22...♘f5?!, there follows 23 cxd5, winning back the pawn with advantage; the c6-square is White's, the d3-bishop is strong and after the imminent dxe6 Black's structure is weakened) 23 bxc4 ♖fd8 (if 23...♘f5, there are several options, among them 24 g4 and 25 g5, which before the exchange of pawns was not so tempting because there was ...♘d6, with a strong outpost on e4) 24 ♗g6! fxg6 25 ♖xd4, and Black's damaged structure plus the strong e5-knight provide evident compensation for the pawn.

20...♘b4!

This simplification suits Black because the main danger for the black king is eliminated.

21 f5 ♘xd3 22 ♕xd3 exf5 23 ♕xf5 ♗b7 *(D)*

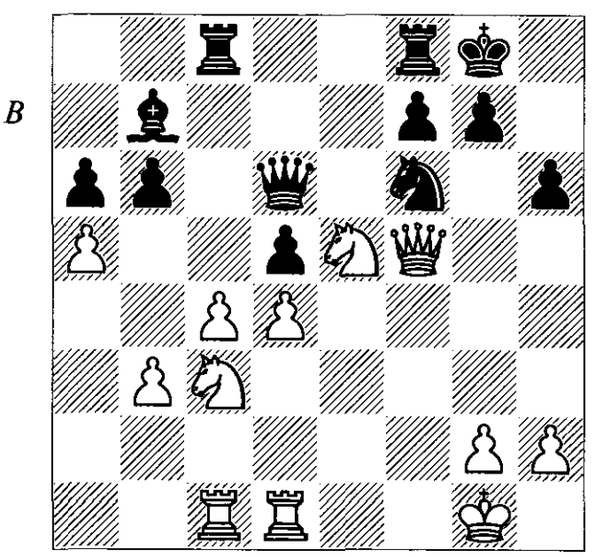


Black regroups his pieces: first the a6-bishop, which is no longer doing anything on that square, heads for the long diagonal, and after driving the b5-knight away, the black queen will be able to centralize, thus also increasing its activity.

24 ♖bc1 a6 25 ♘c3 ♕d6

Threatening to invade White's camp with 26...♕b4.

26 a5!? *(D)*

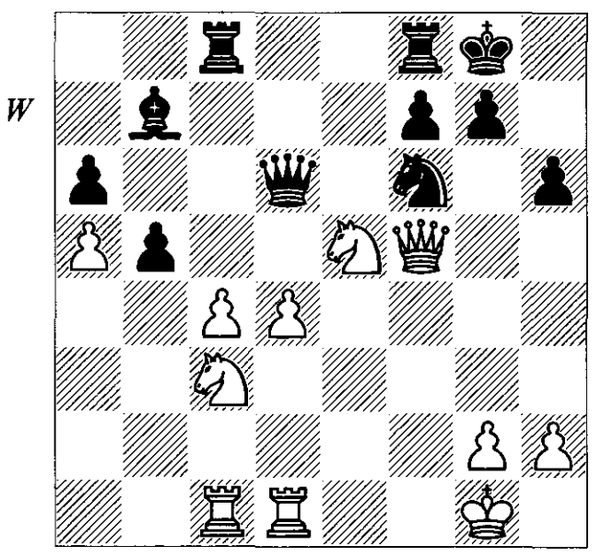


The pawn is untouchable since 26...bxa5? is met by 27 c5, obtaining a passed pawn and closing the long diagonal in exchange for an unimportant pawn.

26...dxc4 27 bxc4

White accepts hanging pawns. If there is nothing immediate that is attractive, in principle taking with the piece and leaving a pawn isolated is not good. In this particular case after 27 ♘xc4, apart from 27...♕c6, the sequence 27...♕b4! 28 axb6 ♕xb3 seems tempting, when White has problems to keep the material balance.

27...b5! *(D)*



The hanging pawns must give up control of the light squares, d5 being specially important.

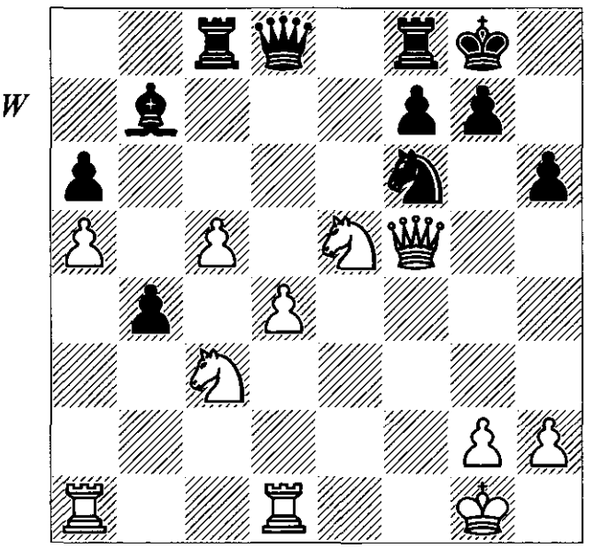
28 c5

The capture of the pawn with 28 cxb5?! axb5 29 ♘xb5 ♕d5 30 ♕f1 ♖xc1 31 ♖xc1 is wrong due to 31...♗a6.

Let's hear what Smyslov has to say regarding the change of structure: "Now White has two connected passed pawns, but he does not succeed in advancing them. At the same time Black's passed pawn threatens to rush forward. By moving the attacked queen with gain of tempo, Black seizes the initiative."

28...♕d8 29 ♖a1 b4 *(D)*

What is the best square for the knight? White has to consider not only where it will be best placed in a few moves but also how to oppose Black's plans, something that is generally advisable but even more so in this position because the fight has reached a critical stage.

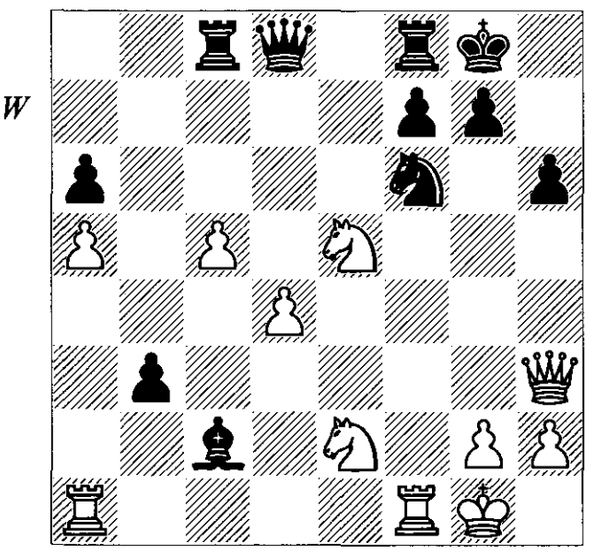


30 ♘e2?

Black's initiative will hardly meet any opposition now. It was necessary to play 30 ♘a4!, and after, for instance, 30...♗e4 31 ♕f2 b3 32 ♘b6 ♖c7 33 ♖ac1 the fight would be at its height.

The control that White exerts here on d5 is the key to keeping the balance.

30...♗e4 31 ♕h3 ♗c2 32 ♖f1 b3 *(D)*



White's position is much worse than in the previous note. His pieces are very passive and Black makes progress unhindered.

33 ♕c3 ♘d5 34 ♕b2 ♘e3 35 ♖fe1

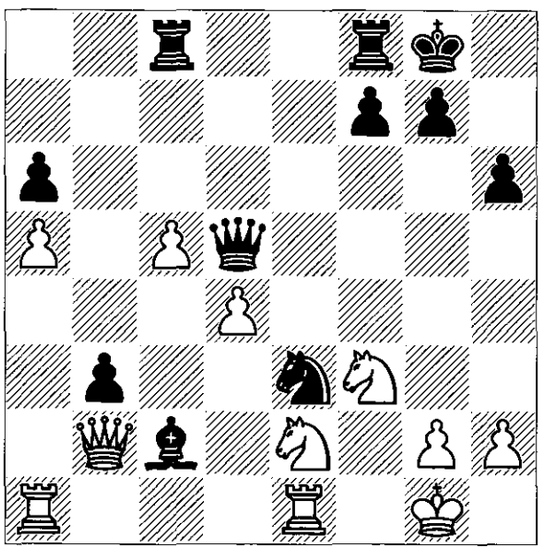
White is forced to stay on the back rank – if 35 ♖f3?, there follows 35...♘d1 and 36...b2, winning.

35...♕d5

Again using the d5-square as a base. The g2-square has to be protected.

36 ♘f3 *(D)*

Smyslov points out that against the more active 36 ♘f4 there follows 36...♕e4 37 g3 ♖fd8 38 ♔f2 (or 38 ♘g4 ♘c4!) 38...♕xd4 39 ♕xd4 ♖xd4 40 ♔xe3 ♖e4+ 41 ♔d2 b2!, winning material.



36...♖fe8!

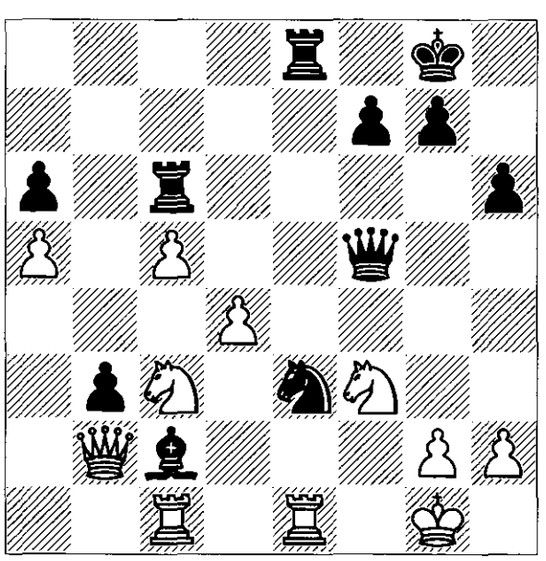
The last piece enters the game. Black tries to maintain the tension because his pieces are more active and therefore better placed for the approaching complications.

Instead, the hasty 36...♘c4 37 ♕c3 b2? 38 ♕xc2 bxa1♕ 39 ♖xa1 would decrease Black's advantage drastically, for White would have repelled the attack at a minimum cost – let's not forget that he still has two passed pawns.

37 ♖ac1 ♖c6!

Heading to the e-file.

38 ♘c3 ♕f5 *(D)*



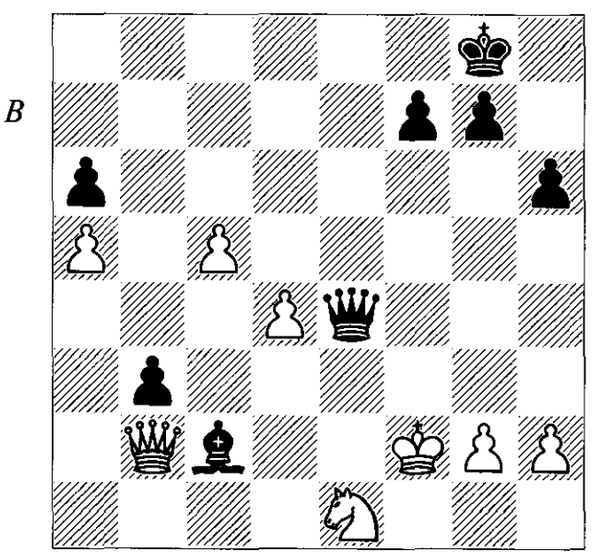
39 ♘d1

White exploits the pin to simplify and get rid of the knight that was entrenched in his position. Undoubtedly it is a relief but the strength of Black's passed pawn is so great already that it is not enough to equalize.

39...♖ce6 40 ♘xe3 ♖xe3 41 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 42 ♔f2

No better is 42 c6, trying to distract the black pieces with the passed pawn. There would follow 42...♕xa5, threatening 43...♕c3, which also decides after 43 ♖xc2 bxc2 44 ♕xc2 ♕c3. Neither was 42 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 43 ♘xe1 ♕e4 44 ♘f3 (44 ♔f2 transposes to the game) 44...♗d1 an improvement.

42...♕e4 43 ♖e1 ♖xe1 44 ♘xe1 *(D)*



How is Black to break the blockade by the white queen?

44...♗d1!

This 'quiet move' threatens 45...♕e2+! 46 ♕xe2 ♗xe2, when White is helpless against Black's passed pawn; e.g., 47 c6 b2 48 c7 ♗g4.

45 c6

There is no defence. Smyslov points out that after 45 h3 (avoiding the ...♗g4 from the previous variation) Black wins with 45...♕f4+ 46 ♔g1 (or 46 ♘f3 ♗xf3 47 gxf3 ♕h2+) 46...♕e3+ 47 ♔f1, and here the familiar winning idea 47...♕e2+ 48 ♕xe2 ♗xe2+, with check, and 49...b2, winning.

45...♕xc6 46 ♘d3 ♕c4 47 ♔e3 ♗c2 48 ♘e1

48 ♘c5 is answered by 48...♕b4 (threatening 49...♕e1+) 49 ♔e2 ♕xa5 50 ♘xb3 ♕b5+ and wins.

48...♗f5 49 ♔d2 ♕b5 50 ♔d1 ♗g4+ 51 ♔c1 ♕c4+ 0-1

Black managed to maintain the dynamic balance with two timely simplifications, first by exchanging the dark-squared bishops by 16...♘h5!, and then getting rid of the d3-bishop with 20...♘b4!. The exchange of both bishops greatly reduced White's attacking potential.

White's centre lost some of its strength after 27...b5!, conceding two passed central pawns but with enough forces to keep them under control. However, the decisive error was not to use prophylactic thinking to defend with 30 ♘a4!.

To close this chapter, let's see a game where simplification and defensive sacrifices are present in the first stages.

Game 27

David Navara – Viktor Bologan

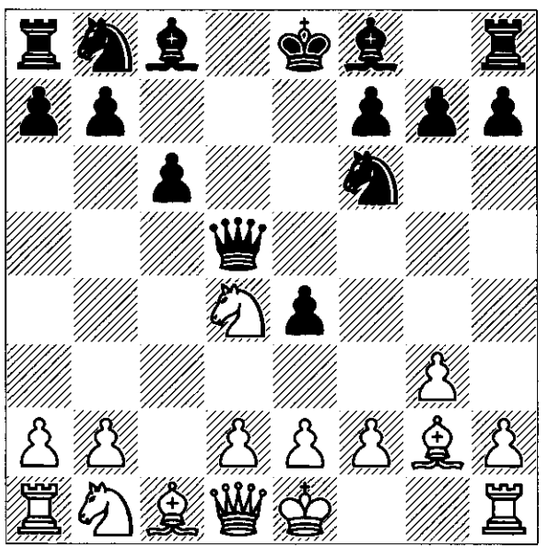
British League (4NCL) 2005/6

English Opening, 1...e5

1 c4 e5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 ♘f3

The alternative is 4 d4 exd4 5 ♕xd4 d5 (or 5...♗b4+), a line in which Navara didn't think he could get an advantage. Korchnoi, though, considered this more promising than the text-move.

4...e4 5 ♘d4 d5 6 cxd5 ♕xd5 *(D)*



7 ♘c2

More common is 7 ♘b3, while 7 e3 is also possible. Navara thought the latter would lead to equality whereas Korchnoi considered it the best move available: play is analogous to the line 1 e4 c5 2 c3 ♘f6 3 e5 ♘d5 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♕xd4, where the best continuation is considered to be 5...e6.

We shall take a brief look at a classic game with 7 ♘b3, Larsen-Korchnoi, Leningrad Interzonal 1973, which bears a certain resemblance to our main game, in Supplementary Game 27.1.

7...♕h5 8 d3?

Unlike Korchnoi in the aforementioned game, Navara doesn't prevent Black's threat. However, this is not best – 8 h3 was to be preferred.

8...♗h3! 9 ♗xh3

Already White must choose between somewhat unpleasant options: allowing the black queen into h3 is nothing to write home about, but White didn't like 9 0-0?! either since Black would prepare to castle queenside, possibly with 9...♘a6, and preventing it by 10 dxe4?! ♖d8 11 ♗d2 ♘g4! would be awkward.

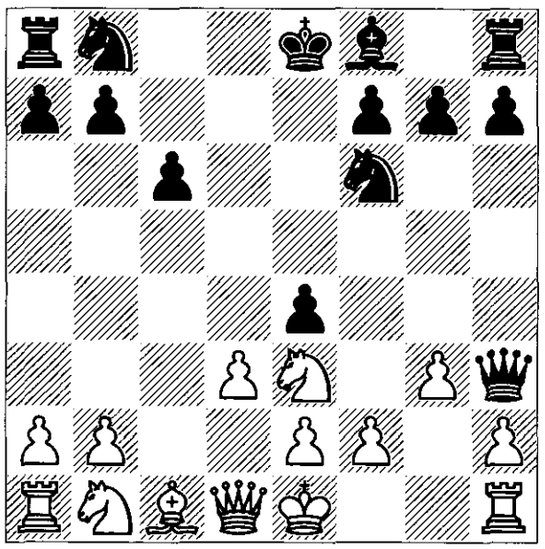
9...♕xh3 10 ♘e3?! *(D)*

White doesn't want to let Black play ...♕g2 but he keeps neglecting his development. Admittedly, 10 ♘c3 ♘bd7, followed by 11...0-0-0, was not totally satisfactory for White either.

10...♘a6

Navara attaches an exclamation mark to this move, preparing to castle queenside with strong pressure on the d-file. The knight has access not only to c5 but also to b4.

Nonetheless it is not clear whether this is better than 10...♘bd7!, for unlike in the game if 11 dxe4, there can follow 11...0-0-0, and the black king escapes from the centre, making it easier for the h8-rook to reach the central files. Clinging on to the e4-pawn is no achievement either: after 12 ♕c2 Black can develop quickly with 12...♗c5 13 ♘c3 ♖he8 14 ♗d2 and now

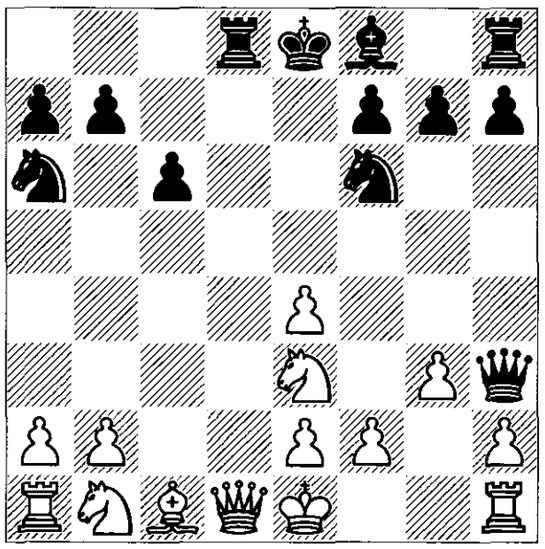


14...♗xe3!, leaving the white king in the centre: 15 ♗xe3 ♘e5, with advantage. The white king is badly placed and disturbs the coordination of the pieces.

11 dxe4

Of course if 11 ♘c3?!, there would follow 11...0-0-0, when Black has a very easy game. Now the d-file is opened but at least the black king must remain in the centre.

11...♖d8 *(D)*



12 ♕c2

Leaving the queen at the mercy of ...♘b4, but there is nothing clearly better: if 12 ♗d2 Navara suggested 12...♘xe4 13 ♕c2 ♕e6!, and White still has problems with his development.

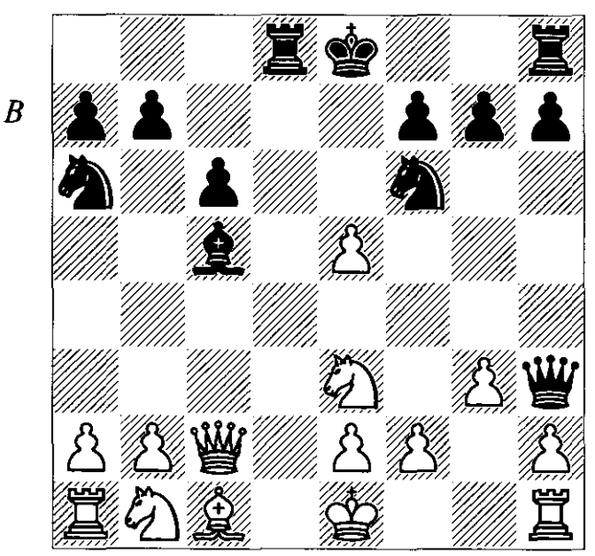
Against 12 ♕a4 the best seems to be to carry on developing by 12...♗d6. White cannot do likewise so easily; e.g., 13 ♘c3 0-0 14 ♗d2 ♘c5 15 ♕c2 ♖fe8 16 0-0-0 ♘fxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4, with advantage to Black: he has better pieces, the absence of the defender of the light squares is deeply felt and White's position is under strong pressure. The threat against f2 is unpleasant given that 18 ♗e1 leaves the h1-rook cut off, but 18 ♖hf1 ♗c5 is even worse.

12...♗c5

Black keeps ...♘b4 in reserve and continues developing with the threat of 13...♗xe3 14 ♗xe3 ♕g2 15 ♖f1 ♘g4, winning.

White needs not fear 12...♘b4 yet for after 13 ♕c3 ♘xe4 14 ♕e5+, forcing 14...♕e6, the exchange of queens is a great relief.

13 e5 *(D)*



White doesn't willingly enter the complications with so many of his own pieces on the first rank – he just didn't have any other option.

13...♘d5!?

13...♗xe3!? 14 exf6 ♕g2 15 ♖f1 ♘b4 16 ♕b3 ♗xc1 is another attractive option, when 17 fxg7?! ♖g8 18 ♕xb4 ♕d5 19 f3 ♕d1+ 20 ♔f2 ♗e3+ favours Black, whose king proves safe enough. The immediate 17 ♕xb4 is better, although 17...gxf6 18 ♕c3 ♖d1+ 19 ♔xd1 ♕xf1+ 20 ♔c2 ♗h6 is still good for Black.

14 ♘xd5

Another move made reluctantly. It is a simplification but doesn't bring any relief because a developed piece is exchanged, allowing another enemy piece to be brought into play.

It was difficult to find a satisfactory way to avoid the threat of damaging White's structure. 14 ♕f5? loses at once to 14...♘xe3!, whereas after 14 ♕e4, moving a developed piece incidentally, there can follow the simple

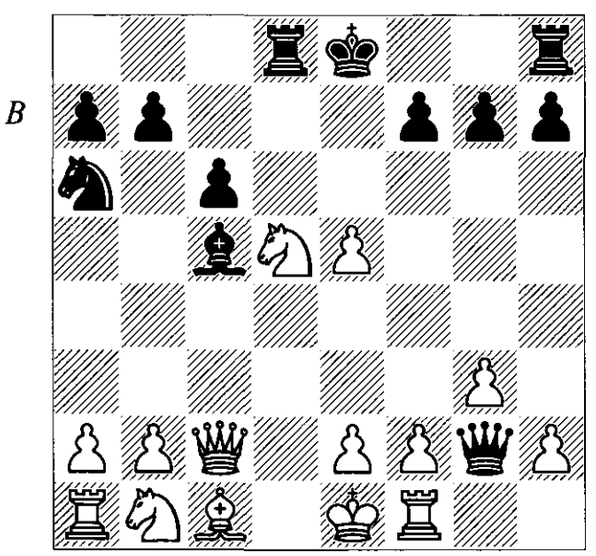
14...0-0, or 14...♘ab4, renewing the threat of taking on e3 because of the possible fork on c2, which prevents White from retaking the second time with the queen. Navara's recommendation was 14...♗xe3 15 ♗xe3 ♘xe3 16 ♕xe3 ♘b4 17 ♘a3 ♕g2 18 ♖f1 0-0, when needless to say the white king in the centre is a big disadvantage.

14...♕g2

Looking for more than the advantage that is obtained by the simple 14...♖xd5. Black wants to have the option of retaking with the queen on d5.

15 ♖f1 *(D)*

Black was not afraid of 15 ♘f6+? gxf6 16 ♖f1 in view of 16...♘b4! 17 ♕xc5 (or 17 ♕b3) 17...♕e4, winning.



15...♖xd5?!

It is often difficult to get it right when there are several promising continuations, seemingly of similar strength. Here there were two.

The centralization 15...♕xd5! was stronger because although White manages to castle after 16 a3 (not 16 ♘c3? because now 16...♘b4 17 ♕b1 ♕xe5 is crushing) 16...♕xe5 17 ♘c3 0-0 18 ♗d2 b5!, his difficulties are not over: 19 0-0-0 b4.

16 a3 ♗d4!

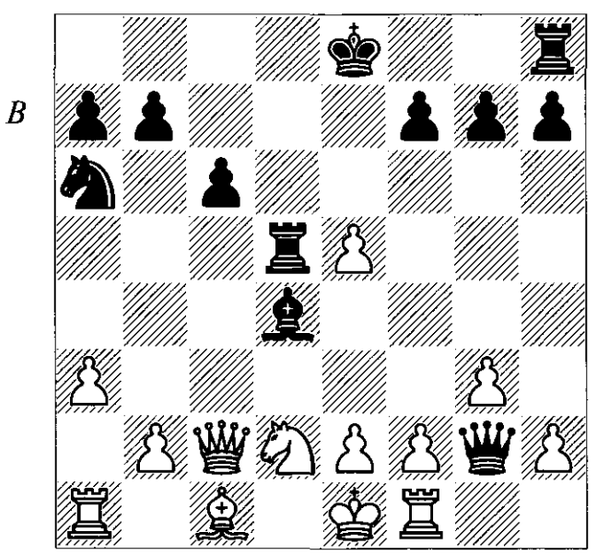
Better than 16...♖xe5 17 ♘c3 0-0 18 ♗f4 ♖h5 19 0-0-0, when White has solved most of his problems, the main one being his king in the centre. White would then worry about neither 19...♖xh2? 20 ♘e4 ♗b6 21 g4 nor 19...♗xf2? 20 g4 ♖h3 21 ♗d6; for instance, 21...♖e8 22 ♕f5! ♗e3+ 23 ♔b1. In both cases Black's major pieces are far away from the main theatre of action.

17 ♘d2

Navara couldn't explain why he rejected his original idea 17 ♘c3, when 17...♖xe5 18 ♗f4 ♖c5 19 0-0-0! is good for White, whereas after 17...♗xc3+ 18 ♕xc3 0-0 19 ♕f3! "White can hold the ending" (Navara). Black would have possibly opted for 19...♖fd8 and after, for instance, 20 ♗e3 ♕h3 21 g4 ♕h4 22 ♕g3 ♕e7 the pawn is compensated by the control of the d-file and the situation of the white king.

Another, even better, possibility is 17 ♗f4!, trying to exchange pieces and preparing to castle queenside. After 17...♗xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 19 ♘c3 0-0 20 0-0-0 White's disadvantage is minimal.

We now return to 17 ♘d2 *(D)*:



17...♗xe5?!

Navara commented that 17...0-0 was preferable:

a) After 18 ♘c4?! Black can play 18...♖c5 19 ♕b3 b5 20 ♘e3 ♕h3, or even better 20...♕e4!. White's development is very backward and the safety of his king is again a cause for concern.

b) It is better to resort once again to simplification: after 18 ♘f3! ♗xe5 19 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 20 ♗e3, with the idea of castling, and keeping an eye on the a7-pawn for the future, both 20...♖d8 and 20...♖d5 are met by 21 ♖d1, and White's disadvantage seems bearable. The e3-bishop is strong, the a6-knight is badly placed (perhaps Black should be playing ...♘c7) and

having exchanged so many pieces, White hopes to be able to regroup his forces without Black managing to exploit the f1-rook being out of play.

18 ♘c4

The control of the d-file can become important after the exchange of queens; e.g., 18 ♕e4?! ♕xe4 19 ♘xe4 ♔e7 20 ♖b1 ♖hd8 21 ♗e3 ♗d4.

18...♗d4

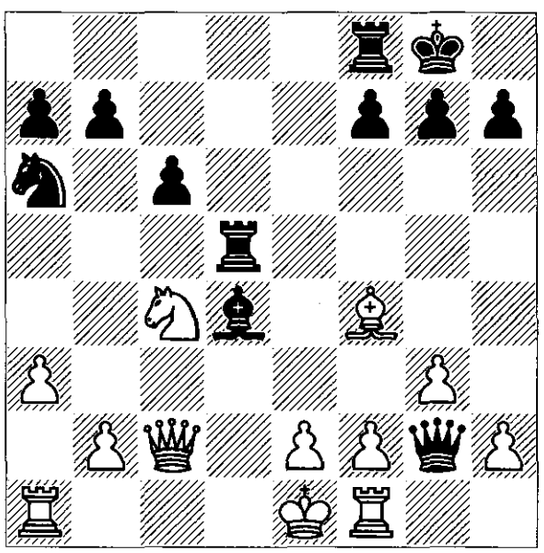
Fighting against ♘e3. In the event of 18...0-0 the capture 19 ♘xe5 would transpose to the previous note, and there is also the possibility 19 ♘e3 ♖c5 20 ♕xh7+!? ♔xh7 21 ♘xg2, when White doesn't seem to be in serious trouble.

19 ♗f4

19 ♘e3 ♗xe3 20 ♗xe3 0-0 21 ♖d1 transposes to what we have already seen, but White seeks something more.

19...0-0 *(D)*

W



What should White do now? The f2-pawn is attacked, tying the white king to its defence. Protecting it with 20 e4? is suicide due to 20...♖e8.

20 0-0-0!

The most important thing is the king's safety – at the cost of a pawn White at long last manages to bring all his pieces into play.

20...♗xf2 21 e4

The alternative was 21 e3, which has no clear refutation. White now manages to stir up complications with his pieces reasonably coordinated at last, whereas the black pieces are somewhat compromised.

21...♖xd1+ 22 ♖xd1 ♘c5

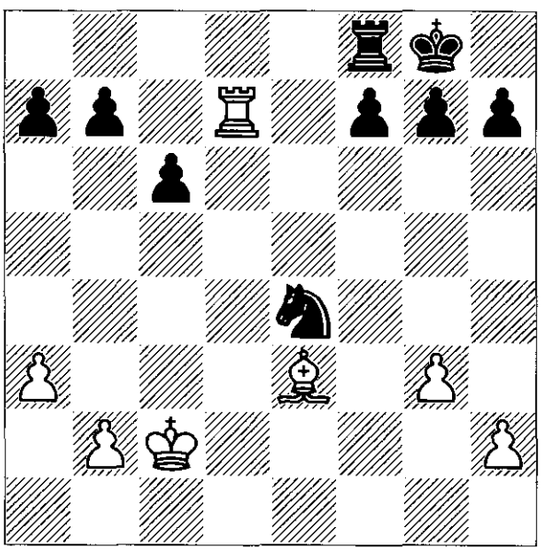
Black has his pieces placed somewhat awkwardly and cannot capture a second pawn. If 22...♕xh2?, there follows 23 ♘e5! and if 23...h5 White swings to the attack with 24 ♘f3 ♕g2 25 ♘g5, threatening e5-e6, and 25...f6? is not possible due to 26 ♕b3+ ♔h8 27 ♕f7!, with a quick mate.

23 ♘e3!

Giving up another pawn to reach a tenable endgame since the original idea 23 ♗d6? is unsound: there follows 23...♖d8 24 ♗xc5 ♖xd1+ 25 ♕xd1 ♗xc5, winning.

23...♗xe3+ 24 ♗xe3 ♕xc2+ 25 ♔xc2 ♘xe4 26 ♖d7 *(D)*

B



White is two pawns down but he will win one back and Black's queenside structure will end up weakened. Since White will keep his rook active and his bishop is very strong, he is guaranteed a balanced game, completely justifying his sacrifice of two pawns.

Another important practical factor, explaining the remaining play, is that Black, negatively affected by his previous advantage and his current material advantage, is still trying to win, whereas White is content with the draw.

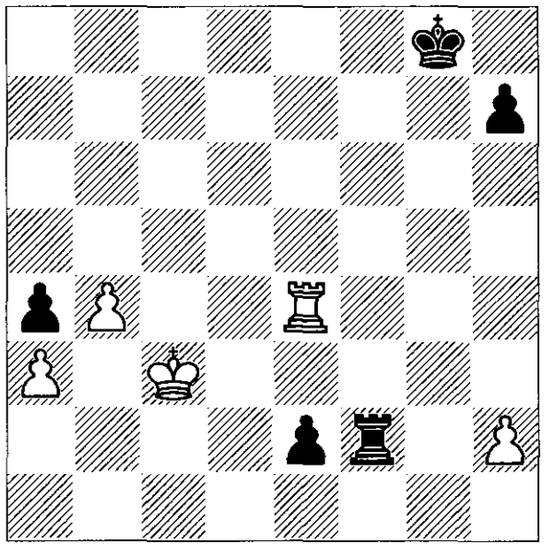
26...b5 27 ♖c7 a5

After 27...c5 28 ♖xa7 Black would at once have his pawns a little weaker than after 27 ♖xa7.

28 ♖xc6 f5

The passive 28...♖b8 is not encouraging – there could follow 29 ♔d3 f5 (or 29...♘f6 30 ♗d4 ♘d7 31 b3!, followed by 32 ♖a6) 30 ♗b6 a4 31 g4!.

29 ♖b6 g5 30 ♖xb5 f4 31 gxf4 gxf4 32 ♖e5! fxe3 33 ♖xe4 ♖f2+ 34 ♔c3 e2 35 b4 a4?! *(D)*



An ambitious move but the hope of exploiting the weakness of a3 is so remote that from a practical viewpoint it is risky – yet another weakness appears on a4.

The time-trouble White was under also had an influence on Black's decision.

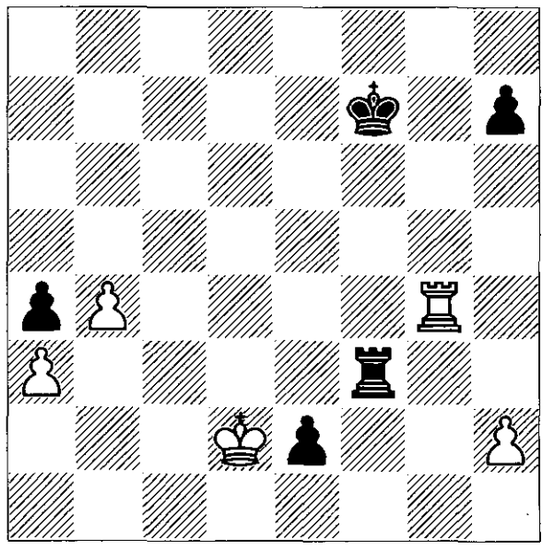
36 ♔d2

It is not possible to play 36 b5 ♖f3+ 37 ♔b4?? due to 37...♖f4, winning.

36...♖f3

Black rejects the draw he could achieve with 36...♖xh2 37 ♖xe2 ♖h1! 38 ♖e8+ ♔f7 39 ♖a8 h5.

37 ♖g4+! ♔f7 *(D)*

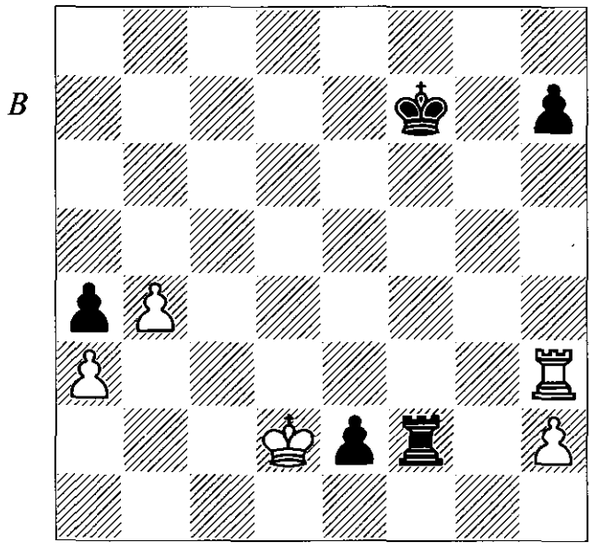


Black firmly rejected the draw offer because of practical reasons too. The position is now balanced and the most likely result is a draw, but Black is already uncomfortable. The excessively ambitious player of the black pieces who went for 35...a4?! is now more realistic but it is more difficult for him to adapt to the new situation after wasting such a clear advantage, than for the player of the white pieces, who had been so close to a quick defeat, and is now relieved and playing ambitiously.

38 ♖g3 ♖f2

When annotating this game, Navara pointed out that Fritz 9 preferred 38...♖b3 39 ♔xe2 ♖b2+ 40 ♔d3 ♖xh2 41 ♔c4 ♖b2, and the defensive resource ...♖b3 is enough to reach the draw; e.g., 42 ♖h3 ♔g6 (or 42...♖b3 43 ♖xh7+ ♔e8!, but not 43...♔e6? 44 ♖a7 ♖xa3 45 ♔b5 ♔d6 46 ♖xa4 ♖h3 47 ♖a7!, winning) 43 ♖c3 ♖b3! 44 ♖xb3 axb3 45 ♔xb3 h5 and draws. Also not to be feared is 42 b5 ♔e6 43 ♖h3 ♖b3 44 ♖xh7 ♔d6, and draws.

39 ♖h3! *(D)*



What should Black play now? Black already had less than two minutes on the clock and made a decisive mistake.

39...♔g6?

Worth considering is 39...e1♕++ 40 ♔xe1 ♖a2, but the clearest path to the draw, as Navara indicated, was 39...♔e6! 40 ♔e1 ♖g2 41 ♖e3+ (also 41 ♖xh7 ♔d5 42 ♖h4 ♔c6 leads to a draw; e.g., 43 ♖h5 ♔b6 44 ♖a5 ♖xh2 45 ♖xa4 ♖h5! 46 ♔xe2 ♔b7, and the white rook cannot get out) 41...♔d5 42 ♖xe2 ♖g1+ 43 ♔f2 ♖b1 44 ♖e3 ♔d4, and the active play plus the resource ...♖b3 are enough to obtain the draw.

40 ♔e1 ♖f1+

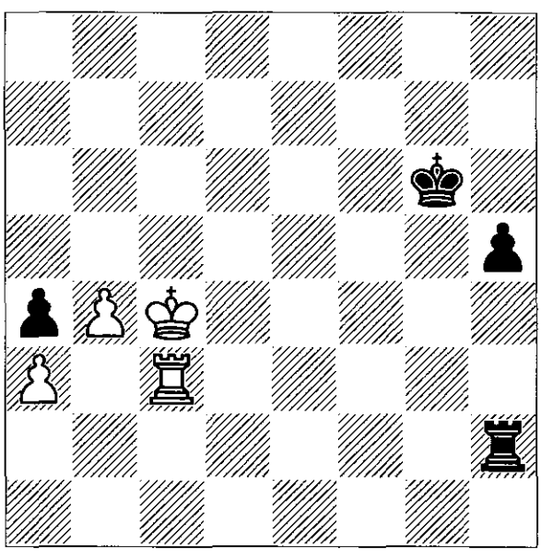
Having played 39...♔g6 makes 40...♖g2?? impossible now due to 41 ♖g3+, winning.

41 ♔xe2 ♖a1 42 ♖c3!

Clearing the way for the king. The game is now decided.

42...♖a2+ 43 ♔d3 ♖xh2 44 ♔c4 h5 *(D)*

After 44...♖b2 45 ♔b5 ♖b3 there is the timely check 46 ♖c6+, followed by 47 ♔xa4.



45 ♔b5!

Now the two queenside pawns beat the rook and the remote black king.

If instead 45 b5? ♖b2 46 ♔c5 ♖b3! 47 ♖c1 ♖xa3 48 b6 ♖b3 49 ♔c6 h4 50 b7 h3 (not 50...♔g5? 51 ♖c5+ ♔g4 52 ♖b5, winning) 51 ♔c7 ♔g5, Black easily draws.

45...h4 46 ♔xa4 ♔f5 47 b5 ♖b2 48 ♔a5 ♔g4 49 a4 h3 50 ♔b6

Not 50 ♖xh3?? ♔xh3 51 ♔b6 ♔g4 52 a5 ♔f5 53 a6 ♔e6 54 a7 ♖a2 55 ♔b7 ♔d6 56 b6 ♔c5, and draws, but giving up the rook later also worked after 50 b6 h2 51 ♖c1 ♔h3 52 ♔a6 ♔g2 53 b7 h1♕ 54 ♖xh1 ♔xh1 55 a5 ♔g2 56 ♔a7 ♔f3 57 b8♕, winning.

50...♖b1 51 ♖xh3 ♔xh3 52 a5 ♔g4 53 a6 ♔f5 54 a7 ♖a1 55 ♔b7 1-0

The inaccuracy, or rather mistake, 8 d3? – not using prophylactic thinking – left White's position fragile. The exchange of bishops with 8...♗h3! gave White light-square weaknesses. The white king was particularly affected because it had to remain in the centre for longer than advisable.

Black's play was very good and put White against the wall. Perhaps 15...♕xd5! is one of the few moments when Black's play can clearly be improved upon.

White rose to the occasion: the defensive pawn sacrifice 20 0-0-0! was an excellent decision, getting out of the woods, and with a new sacrifice – 23 ♘e3! – the activity obtained was enough to balance the game.

Lastly, competitive factors were for the most part the cause of the unexpected outcome. Black didn't adapt to the change of scenario, shown by the ambitious but risky 35...a4?!, which, without tipping the balance, brought defeat closer than victory. A serious mistake – 39...♔g6? – was then enough to lose the game.

Supplementary Game 27.1

Bent Larsen – Viktor Korchnoi

Leningrad Interzonal 1973

English Opening, 1...e5

1 c4 e5 2 g3 c6 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘d4 d5 5 cxd5 ♕xd5 6 ♘b3 ♘f6

Needless to say, surrendering the advanced pawn to win space with 6...e3? 7 f3 is not a good way to make progress. The weakness created in White's camp is insignificant, and White would occupy the centre with gain of tempo.

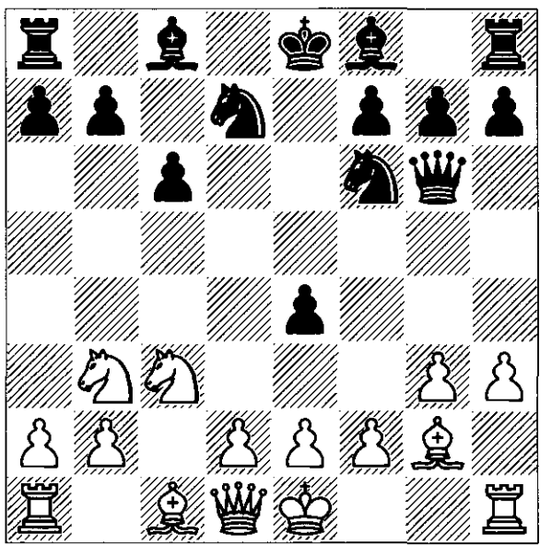
7 ♗g2 ♕h5 8 h3

Preventing 8...♗h3, whose strength we saw in the main game.

8...♕g6 9 ♘c3 ♘bd7 *(D)*

Here too it was difficult to decide between this deployment and 9...♘a6. A third possibility was 9...♗b4.

10 ♕c2

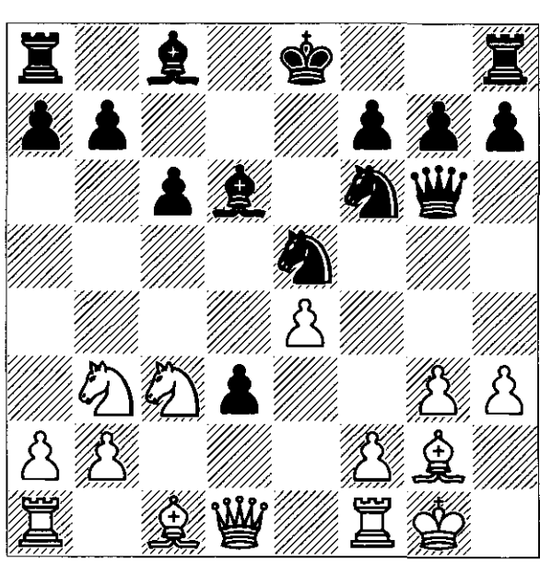


Korchnoi indicated that Black had managed through unconventional means to develop his pieces freely, at the price of leaving his e4-pawn somewhat weak.

During the game Korchnoi was afraid of White playing 10 0-0 and creating a strong centre after eliminating the e4-pawn. For instance:

a) 10...♘c5 11 d3 exd3 12 e4 ♗e6 13 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 14 ♕xd3 ♖d8 15 ♕f3 ♗c4 16 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 17 ♘xd1 (not 17 ♕xd1? ♕xg3) 17...0-0 18 ♕c3 ♖d8 19 ♗e3 (or 19 ♘e3), and White has effectively occupied the centre, winning space and having the better game.

b) In view of the fact that e4 is not prevented in this way, Black can play with his pieces with a view to the kingside by 10...♗d6. If White plays in a similar fashion, 11 d3 exd3 12 e4 ♘e5 *(D)*, it is not easy to play f4 in good circumstances:

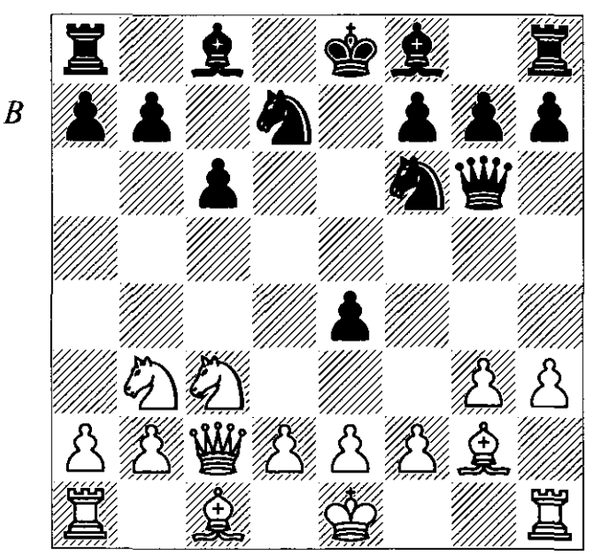


b1) If White prepares it with 13 ♔h2, defending g3, Black can choose between 13...♘eg4+, when the king must go back, or playing for more with 13...h5!?.

b2) 13 ♕e1 is met by 13...♗xh3! 14 f4 ♗xg2 15 ♔xg2 0-0-0, and Black's position is to be preferred. There can follow 16 fxe5 ♗xe5 17 ♗f4 ♖he8, with three pawns for the piece and all the black forces active, whereas White lacks coordination and his king is somewhat exposed.

b3) After the direct 13 f4 Black also gives up material with 13...♕xg3 14 fxe5 ♗xh3! (better than 14...♗xe5? 15 ♖f3 ♕h2+ 16 ♔f1 ♘h5 17 ♖xd3 ♘g3+ 18 ♔f2 ♗xh3 19 ♕g1, when, although Black again has three pawns for the piece, White's pieces are better placed in the ending, giving him the advantage) 15 ♕f3 ♕xg2+ 16 ♕xg2 ♗xg2 17 ♔xg2 ♗xe5 18 ♖f5 ♗xc3 19 bxc3 0-0, when Black has four pawns for the piece. His chances are not inferior at all.

We now return to 10 ♕c2 *(D)*:



10...e3 11 ♕xg6 exf2+

Creating three pawn-islands without making White's development any easier, which would not be the case had Black captured on d2.

12 ♔xf2 hxg6 13 d4

This move seeks to extract the most from the position. It is a decision typical of Larsen's ambitious style. The white centre will control important squares but it will also be easy for the black pieces to lay siege to it. The alternative was the modest 13 d3.

13...♘b6 14 e4 ♗e6 15 ♗f4 ♗b4 16 ♘c5?!

White keeps playing most actively but in a few moves it will be felt that the white centre

lacks support, the d4-pawn in particular; its strength will decrease. Better was 16 ♖ad1.

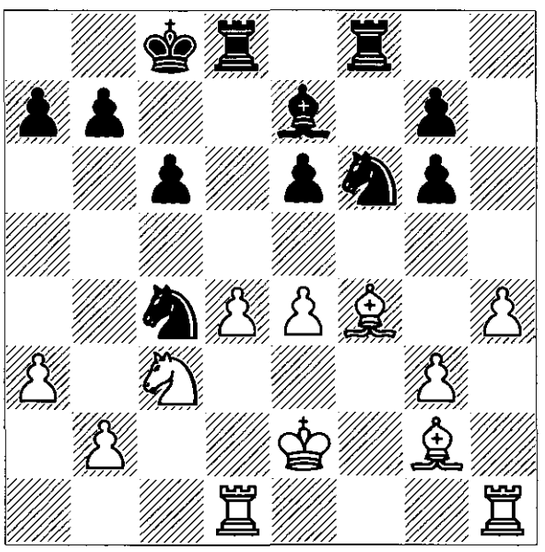
16...0-0-0! 17 ♘xe6

The complications after 17 a3 ♗xc5 18 dxc5 ♘c4 19 b3 ♘b2 favour Black; for example, 20 ♗d6?! ♗xb3! 21 ♖ab1, and the exposure of the white king is tactically exploited by Black with 21...♘d3+ 22 ♔e3 ♗c2 23 ♖a1 ♘xc5! 24 ♗xc5 ♖d3+. White should prefer 20 b4 ♖d3 21 ♖ac1 ♖hd8, although Black has superior piece coordination and his king is better placed.

17...fxe6 18 a3 ♗e7 19 ♖ad1 ♖hf8

"The threat is stronger than its execution" – the jump ...♘c4 hangs over White's position, but first Black activates his rook, creating problems for the white king.

20 ♔e2 ♘c4 21 h4! *(D)*



B

This move was deemed dubious by Osnos, Korchnoi's second, in *Informator 15*, but in his book of best games Korchnoi considered it best, preparing ♗h3 and creating problems for the black king.

What should Black play now? It is necessary to consider the capture of the b2-pawn but after 21...♘xb2 22 ♖b1 ♗xa3 23 ♗h3 the position becomes complicated. Although it isn't clear whether Black is worse, the risks are evident. There are several moves: if 23...♖fe8, there follows 24 d5!, and 24...cxd5? doesn't work due to 25 ♘b5, winning material, but 23...♖xd4 seems playable; for instance, 24 ♗xe6+ ♔d8! (better than 24...♘d7? 25 ♗e5 ♖b4 26 ♗d6) 25 ♗e5 ♖b4 26 ♗d6, and here Black has 26...♖e8! 27 ♗xb4 ♗xb4, when the bad situation of the white king is again the decisive factor. There are many more complex lines that would be difficult to calculate at the board. "Computers do not fear attacks on the king, but for humans they are very unpleasant" as Korchnoi stated. He chose instead...

21...♘h5!

Eliminating the most dangerous enemy.

22 ♗h3 ♖xf4!

With this exchange sacrifice the complications favoured Black. The white king suffered the siege of the enemy pieces – Black won material and eventually the game.

7 Three Memorable Struggles

The last chapter of the book is devoted to three classic games where defence and/or counterattack is paramount. All the topics seen in the previous chapters will be present.

The games contain instructive errors and tremendous struggles for survival, which eventually turn out to be successful.

In the book *Tablas* (Draw), by Verkhovsky, the author 'apologized' for including so many examples of almost miraculous draws by Mikhail Botvinnik. Apart from many other virtues, the fifth World Champion excelled in great tenacity, defensive ingenuity and an impeccable knowledge of the endgame. Our first two games will provide good proof of this.

Game 28

Laszlo Szabo – Mikhail Botvinnik

Budapest 1952

Dutch Defence, Stonewall Variation

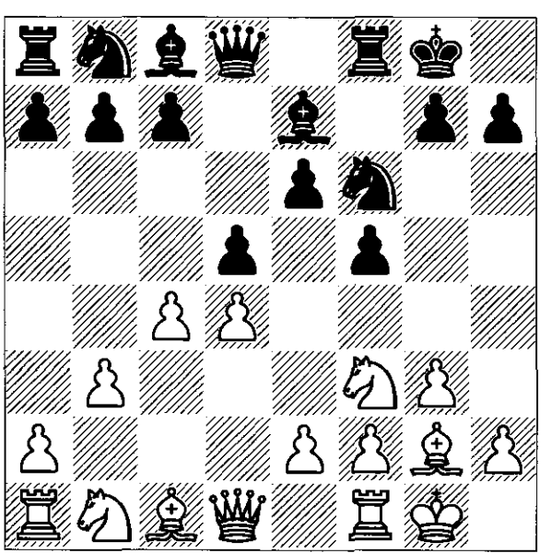
1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 ♘f3 d5

Botvinnik handled the difficult positions of the Stonewall Dutch very skilfully. He obtained brilliant victories with it, managing to prevent the evident weakness of the e5-square from having an important weight in his games.

6 0-0 0-0 7 b3 *(D)*

Botvinnik considered 7 ♘bd2 better, with the thematic plan of controlling e5 by placing the knights on f3 and d3.

B



The exchange of the dark-squared bishops is in principle very convenient for White, who gets rid of the black 'good bishop' that controls the squares of the opposite colour from Black's fixed central pawns. Furthermore it is an important defender of the weak point e5.

The difference in activity between the remaining bishops seems very favourable to White. The exchange of a single piece can be important if the side who loses out doesn't find some kind of compensation, but this is only one of many elements in the struggle.

Often in the games of Botvinnik and later on in the ones of another specialist, Yusupov, Black's bad light-squared bishop turns out to be as strong as White's 'good' one, if not stronger. However, it should be noted that most modern-day Stonewall specialists prefer the set-up with ...♗d6.

7...c6 8 ♗a3 ♘bd7

Carrying on with development without fearing 9 ♘g5, for Black defends e6 effectively by 9...♗xa3 10 ♘xa3 (if 10 ♘xe6?, there follows 10...♕e7, winning material) 10...♕e7.

9 ♕c1

White plans 10 ♗xe7, followed by 11 ♕a3, offering a favourable exchange of queens, when the black queen has no particularly convenient square to move to.

9...♘e4

Now if 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 ♕a3, there is the nice reply 11...♕f6.

10 ♘bd2 ♗xa3

Only now, when the b1-knight moved away and White cannot recapture with it. Otherwise Black would be making White's manoeuvre ♘c2-e1-d3 easier.

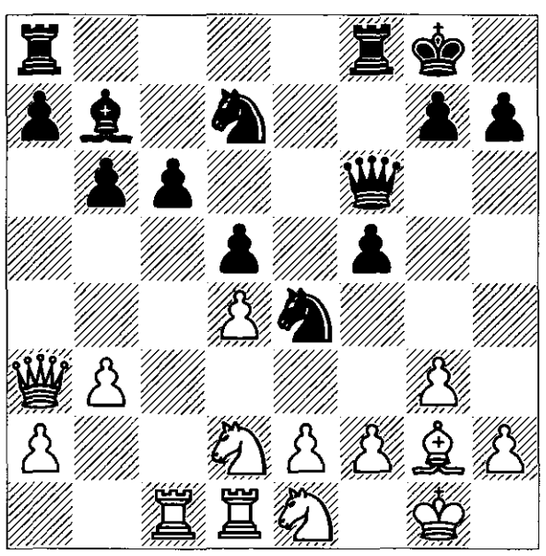
11 ♕xa3 b6

The time has come to develop the c8-bishop. Furthermore Black prepares to change the denomination of the bishop from 'bad' to at least 'passable' by playing a timely ...c5 and becoming active.

12 ♖ac1 ♗b7 13 ♖fd1 ♕f6

The absence of the dark-squared bishop is compensated by the greater freedom of Black's pieces and his central pressure. Note that the white queen has ended up slightly out of play.

14 cxd5 exd5 15 ♘e1 *(D)*



Seeking the aforementioned placement of the knights, given that 15...♕xd4?? doesn't work due to 16 ♘xe4, winning.

15...a5

This manoeuvre cancels the pressure from the white queen on the a7-pawn, therefore freeing the a8-rook. It also prepares ...♗a6. Botvinnik ascribed the paternity of this manoeuvre, in similar positions, to Ragozin, although he added that in this position the direct method of counterattack by 15...♘xd2 16 ♖xd2 f4!, with a good game, was to be preferred.

16 ♘df3?!

Consistent, but giving Black a free hand. Better was 16 e3, although there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with Black's position after 16...♗a6, or 16...c5, and if 17 ♘df3, it is promising to play 17...a4!, when Black has active play and nothing serious to complain about.

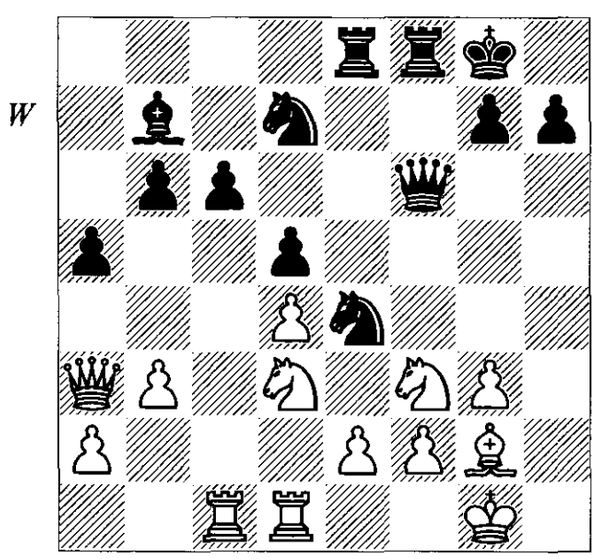
16...f4!

Before White can thwart it with 17 ♘d3, Black manages to open the f-file, slightly weakening the white king's position as a result.

17 ♘d3 fxg3 18 hxg3

Of course 18 fxg3?, trying to free the f3-knight by not leaving a loose pawn on f2, would be bad on account of 18...♕h6, exploiting the weaknesses created precisely on the dark squares.

18...♖ae8 *(D)*



The control of the e5-square and the inconvenience caused by the exchange of the 'good' bishop have been resolved. Black obtains compensation for this with his better piece-play and pressure on the white king's position.

19 ♖c2

Preparing to double rooks on the c-file, with pressure against c6.

It was not possible to occupy e5 with 19 ♘de5? ♘xe5 20 dxe5 because of 20...♖xe5! 21 ♘xe5 ♕xf2+ 22 ♔h1 (worse is 22 ♔h2 ♕xg3+, followed by 23...♖f2) 22...♘xg3+ 23 ♔h2 ♖f5, winning.

19...♕h6 20 ♕c1 ♕d6

The exchange of queens would clearly favour White, who would get rid of his problems on the kingside and put pressure on Black's structure.

21 ♗h3

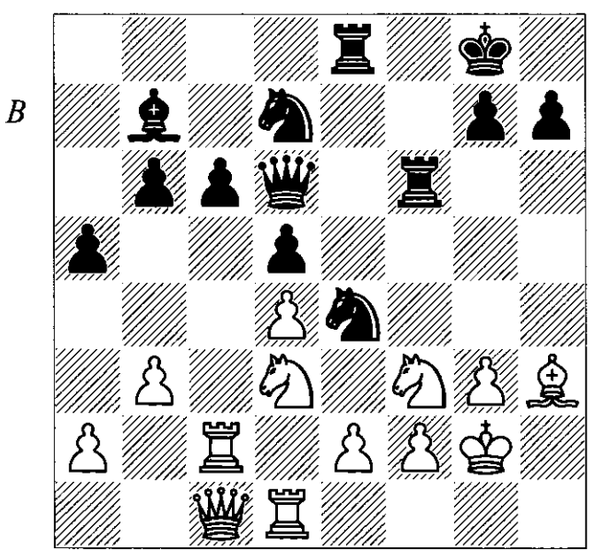
Played with ambition. A vital defender of the e5-square is going to be eliminated but let's not forget that the white king's position will also end up more exposed after this exchange.

21...♖f6

Giving real strength to the eventual knight sacrifice on g3, by being able to join the attack along Black's third rank.

22 ♔g2 *(D)*

Defending the weak point but moving onto the long diagonal. Wrong is 22 ♗xd7? ♕xd7 23 ♘de5? ♕h3!, with a mating attack.



22...c5!

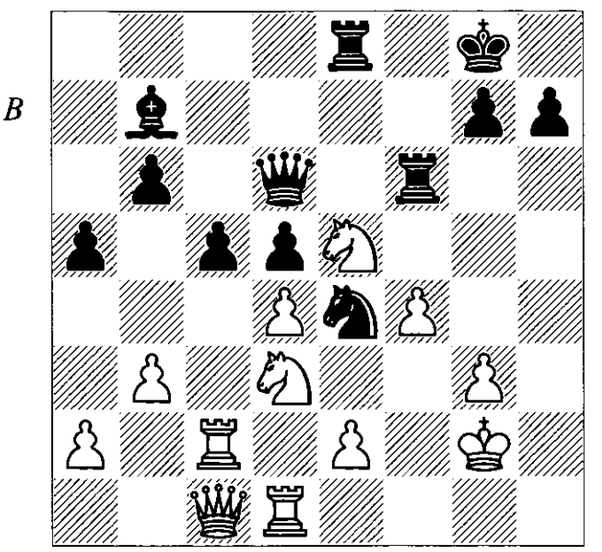
The b7-bishop is the main beneficiary of White's manoeuvre to occupy the e5-square. The fight revolves around what is more important, the occupation of that square or the weakness of the white king.

23 ♗xd7

"A committal decision: White exchanges a good defender of his king." (Botvinnik).

23...♕xd7 24 ♘fe5 ♕d6 25 f4?! *(D)*

The Hungarian Laszlo Szabo was the best player of his country for many years – he participated on no fewer than three consecutive occasions (1950, 1953 and 1956) in the Candidates tournament. He had a sharp style. Botvinnik stated that Szabo's character occasionally led him to make rash decisions. Both 23 ♗xd7 and this ambitious move are proof of this. Better was the less sharp 25 e3.



Taking into account only general considerations, it is clear that the idea behind 25 f4 is good since White consolidates his control over e5. However, the absence of the light-squared bishop might be felt when the game opens up. The text-move could then decrease the protection of the king.

These are general considerations, about which one can argue, but tactics are required to find out what is more precise, and they admit less discussion.

25...cxd4!

Showing that White failed to think prophylactically. This move opens the c-file and enables Black to infiltrate. This was probably underestimated by White – or he overestimated his chances when occupying the seventh rank. Now tactics rule the day and White will be forced to give up more material.

26 ♖c7 ♘c5!

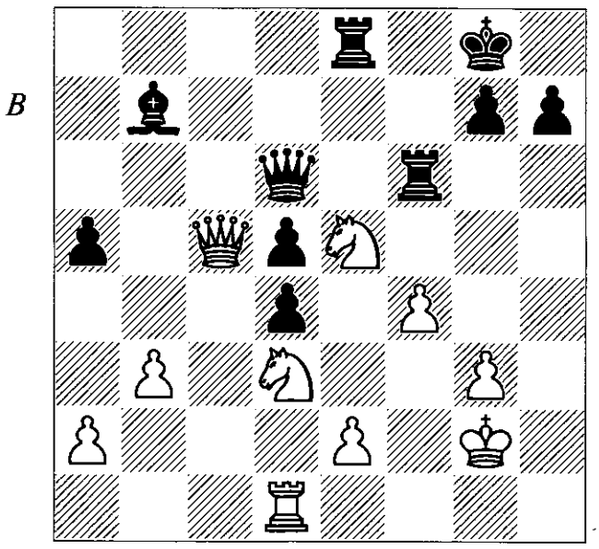
Winning the exchange but not the game, since the white knights are strong.

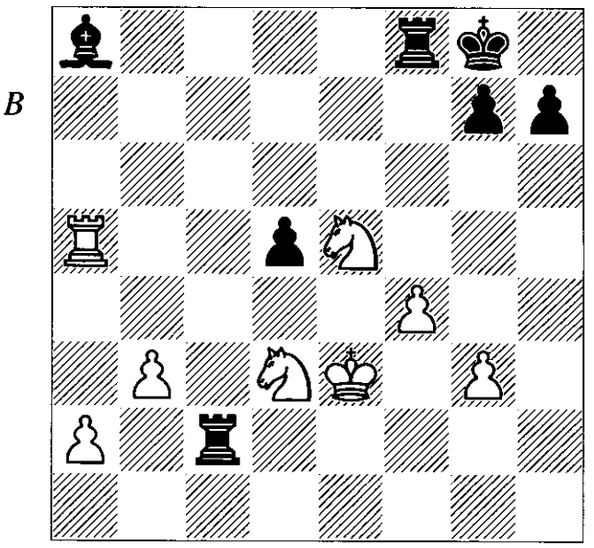
27 ♖xc5 bxc5 28 ♕xc5 *(D)*

28...♕xc5

An important decision, and a good one. Botvinnik suggested retaining the queens with 28...♕a6, but at the board he decided to play safe, which in view of the coming time-trouble is understandable. The text-move gives him the advantage.

29 ♘xc5 ♗a8 30 ♖xd4 ♖c8 31 ♘cd3





White has a pawn for the exchange, the black bishop is passive and the a5-pawn weak. Were he to capture it, he would have two passed pawns, which would give him certain compensation, but Black has his advantages too: he controls the open file and White's structure has been forced to move forward, or be weakened, and there are clear targets in the e2- and g3-pawns.

31...♖c2

In his notes Botvinnik criticized this natural move, exchanging the a5-pawn for the one on e2, suggesting instead 31...♖b6 32 ♖a4 ♖b5, which is more prosaic, but he thought that Black could gradually convert his advantage into victory.

The course of the game doesn't indicate whether this was preferable, but it is true that from a practical point of view conceding two united passed pawns on the queenside in time-trouble is very risky.

32 ♖a4 ♖xe2+

Black wants more than a draw, which he could have reached after 32...d4+ 33 ♔f2 ♖h6, with 34 ♖xd4 ♖h2+ 35 ♔g1 ♖h1+ one possible finish. The same result is achieved after 34 ♘g4 ♖e6 35 ♘ge5 (35 ♘de5? d3! gives Black a decisive attack) 35...♖h6.

33 ♔f3 ♖c2 34 ♖xa5 ♖f8 35 ♔e3 *(D)*

If we compare only the importance of the passed pawns, the one Black got on d5 is far worse than the two White obtained. However, there are more factors, such as the activity the black rooks enjoy, as well as the emergence of the weakness on g3. Another important factor is that the a8-bishop is passive and basically helpless.

What should Black play to make the most of his position?

35...d4+?

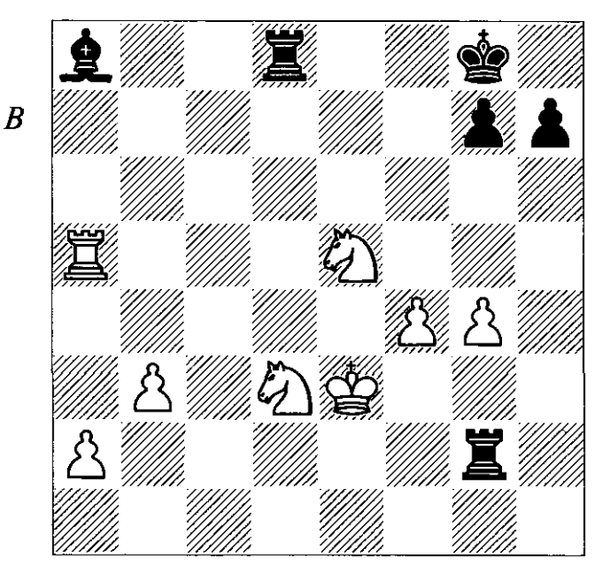
The idea is correct, but is carried out in the wrong move-order – 35...h5! was very strong, fixing the g3-pawn first, playing 36...d4+! and 37...♖g2 only after, for instance, 36 b4, and thus getting a passed pawn on the h-file which would be very dangerous.

36 ♔xd4 ♖d8+ 37 ♔e3 ♖g2

The time-trouble will keep causing havoc in Black's position, but this move is good – only it was not made with the right idea in mind.

Another acceptable idea was 37...♗g2, to destroy White's strong central command and the solidity of his knights by playing 38...♗f1 and 39...♗xd3. White should then devote himself to defending against the pins.

38 g4 *(D)*



38...♖c2?!

Black had a draw with 38...♖g3+ 39 ♔f2 ♖g2+, when White should settle for 40 ♔e3 ♖g3+, as 40 ♔f1? ♖c2, followed by 41...♗e4, leaves him very passive – his king isn't participating in the struggle.

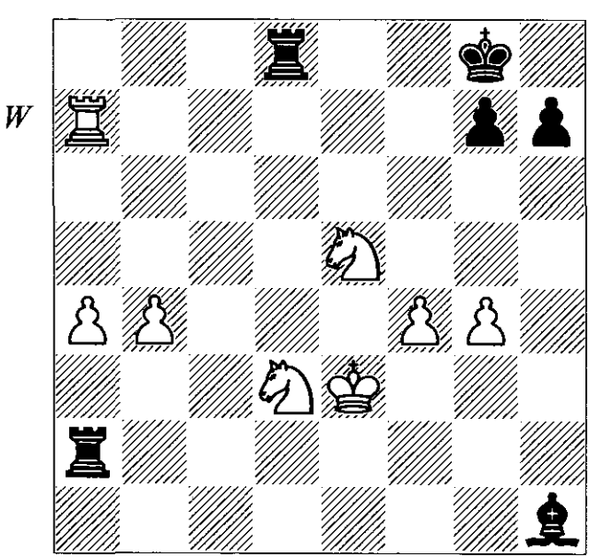
39 b4 ♗d5 40 a4 ♗h1?

The last move in the time-trouble is clearly weak – it doesn't threaten anything and throws away a vital tempo. Better was 40...♗g2, still with the idea of exchanging the d3-knight by 41...♗f1, as Botvinnik indicated. Now Black's position does become critical.

41 ♖a7

This was the sealed move. White threatens 42 ♖d7, solving the mobility problems of the d3-knight. Whether the rooks are exchanged or not, the white pawns would then become almost unstoppable.

41...♖a2! *(D)*



Resistance! For the time being Black avoids the immediate threat by attacking the a4-pawn.

White must now decide how to push his pawns.

42 b5?

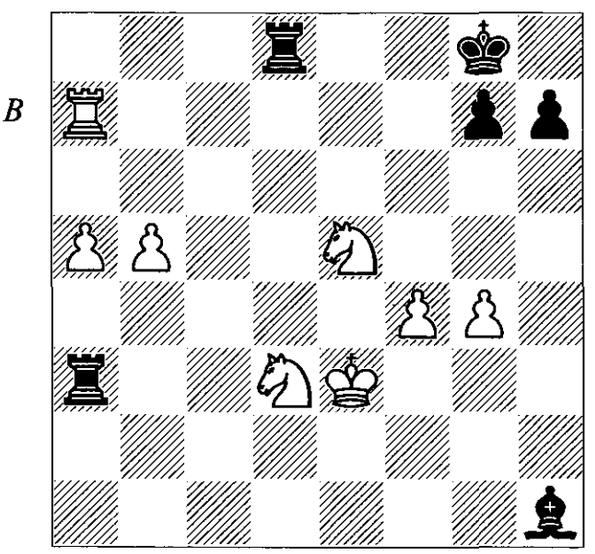
Missing a great opportunity. White simply keeps pushing his pawns, without caring in which order, because it seems decisive.

As Botvinnik indicated, 42 a5! was very strong, with another idea in mind – leaving the pawn protected so as after 42...♖a3 to play 43 ♖d7!. The rook exchange gives more freedom to the white king, which can head for the queenside to support his pawns. After 43...♖xd7 44 ♘xd7 ♗g2 (no better is 44...♗c6 45 ♘7e5 ♗b5 46 ♔d4 ♖b3 47 ♘c4 ♔f8 48 ♔c5, winning, as Botvinnik showed) 45 ♘7e5 ♗f1 46 ♔d4 ♔f8 47 ♘c5 ♔e7 48 ♘e4!, with the idea of playing ♔c5-b6, and if Black stops it by 48...♔d8, there follows 49 ♘g5, winning more material.

The position is not one of mathematical victory. There are more defences to try but in his adjournment analysis Botvinnik didn't find an effective method against 42 a5!, to which he had devoted most of his efforts. He had spent less time looking at the text-move. However, there are many useful ideas that were left 'floating' from the analysis of the more dangerous move.

42...♖a3 43 a5 *(D)*

Carrying on with the idea. 43 b6 ♖a8! 44 ♖d7 ♖b8 45 ♖d4 ♖a8, controlling the white pawns, was not dangerous.



How should Black defend now?

That "chess is the tragedy of one tempo" is felt in the line 43...♗g2? (remember 40...♗h1?) 44 b6 ♗f1 45 b7 ♗xd3 46 ♖a8!, winning.

43...♖a8? 44 ♖xa8+ ♗xa8 45 ♘c4 doesn't hold either – with the support of the three white pieces the pawns prove decisive.

It is already time to seek extraordinary solutions.

43...g5!!

Conceding yet another passed pawn looks like suicide, but Black gets a lot of mobility for his rooks and White's strong knights lose a great deal of their invulnerability. Needless to say, there is a great tactical work justifying this move.

44 f5

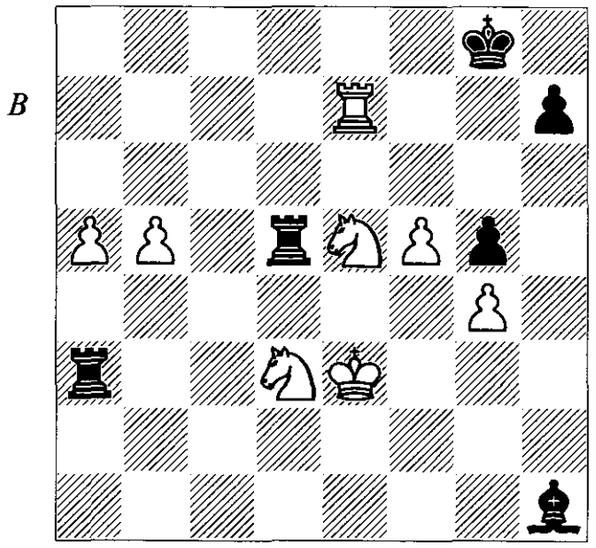
Black could be optimistic of achieving a draw after 44 b6 gxf4+ 45 ♔xf4 ♖a4+ 46 ♔f5 ♖a8 47 b7 ♗xb7 48 ♖xb7 ♖4xa5.

44...♖d5

Another added advantage of 43...g5!! is that the d8-rook doesn't have to protect the back rank – this move allowed mate before.

Now Black threatens both 45...♖xe5+ and 45...♖xb5.

45 ♖e7 *(D)*



Giving up on promoting the pawns. However, now the rook heads to attack the black king, making the most of a new attacker, the f-pawn, and the remoteness of black defenders.

45...♖xb5 46 f6 ♖xe5+

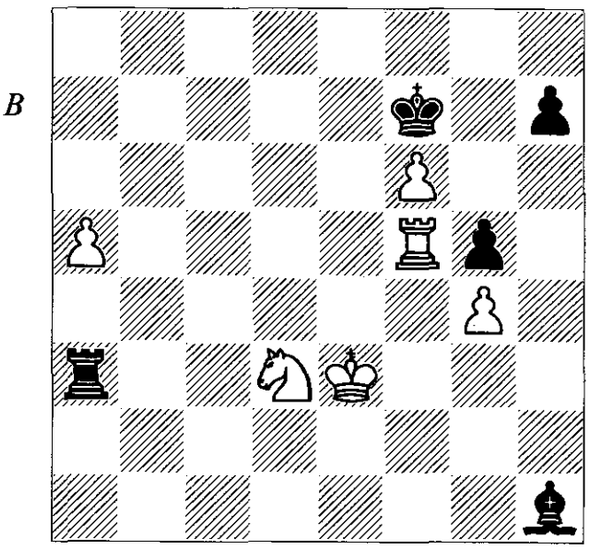
Forced because of the threat of mate on e8.

47 ♖xe5 ♔f7 48 ♖f5 *(D)*

After 48 ♖xg5? ♔xf6 the defensive task would be simple – exchanging the kingside pawns and then giving up the bishop for the a-pawn.

The position has changed a great deal. Let's hear what Botvinnik had to say: "Black's achievements are indisputable. All his pieces are active and White no longer has connected passed pawns, and I thought that I should be able to draw... And here I was fortunate enough, at the board, to find one of the most brilliant combinations in my career."

Do you find it too? How should Black meet the threat of 49 ♔d2 followed by ♘e5+? The solution is difficult and requires a good knowledge of endgame theory.



48...♗b7!

The first step of the defensive combination: the bishop retreats in order to take aim at... the g4-pawn!

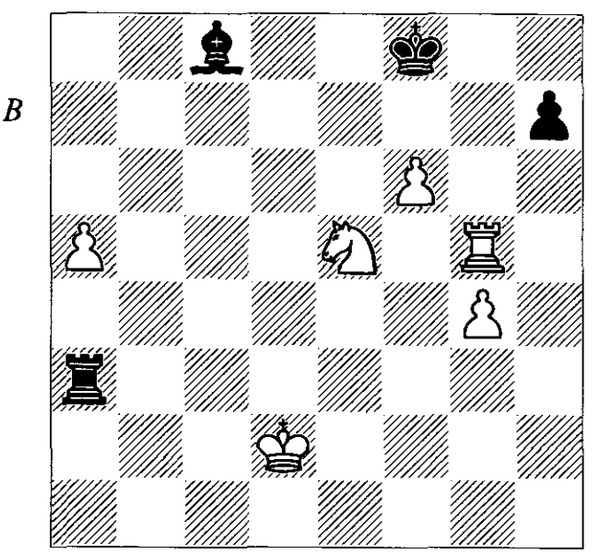
49 ♔d2

If 49 ♔d4 ♖a4+ 50 ♔c3 ♖a3+, we would reach a similar position. Black can force the king to retreat to the first rank, but that wouldn't change the situation.

49...♗c8!

Continuing with the idea of counterattack.

50 ♘e5+ ♔f8 51 ♖xg5 *(D)*



How does the defensive idea continue?

If 51...♗e6?, there can follow 52 ♖h5 (more complicated is 52 f7 ♔e7, when after 53 ♖g8? ♗xf7 54 ♖g7 ♖xa5! Black draws despite temporarily losing a piece, although 53 ♖h5! is stronger) 52...♔g8 53 f7+ ♗xf7 54 ♖g5+ ♗g6 55 ♘xg6 hxg6 56 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 57 ♖g5, with a winning endgame.

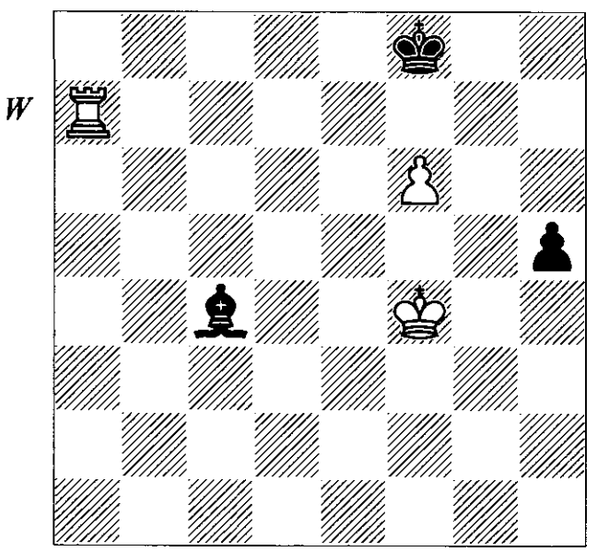
51...♖xa5!!

This surprising exchange sacrifice is the culmination of the defensive manoeuvre begun with 48...♗b7!. White loses two pawns and Black reaches a theoretical endgame where the exchange and an extra pawn are not enough to win.

52 ♘d7+

52 ♘g6+ leads to a similar position, and to the same result.

52...♗xd7 53 ♖xa5 ♗xg4 54 ♔e3 ♗e6 55 ♔f4 ♗c4 56 ♖a7 h5 *(D)*



Black doesn't need the pawn – by playing carefully in order to prevent the white king from supporting the passed pawn, Black achieves the draw.

57 ♔g5 h4 58 ♔xh4 ♗b3 59 ♔g5 ♗c4 60 ♖c7 ♗a2

The key to the defence is being able to drive away the white king when it reaches g6 – now there is 61...♗b1+.

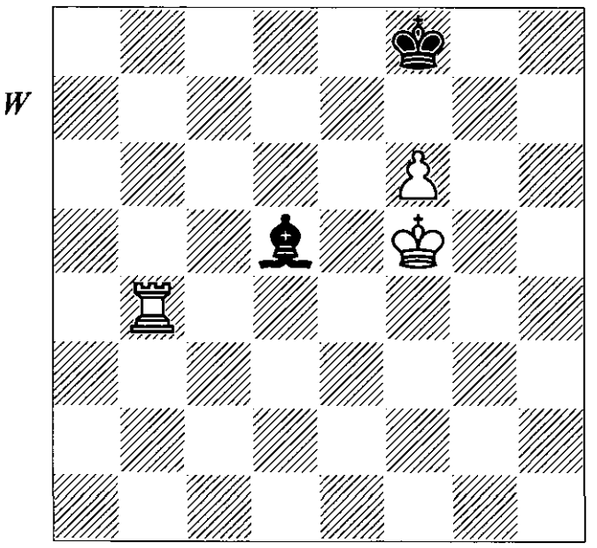
61 ♖c1 ♗d5 62 ♔f5 ♔f7 63 ♔e5 ♗b3 64 ♖c7+ ♔f8 65 ♖b7 ♗c4 66 ♖b4

"White tries to drive away the bishop from the a2-g8 diagonal, but the board is too big!" (Botvinnik).

An important resource to take into account is that after 66 f7 Black must play 66...♔g7!, preventing the white king from entering, and not 66...♗xf7?? due to 67 ♔f6, winning.

66...♗a2 67 ♔f5 ♗d5! *(D)*

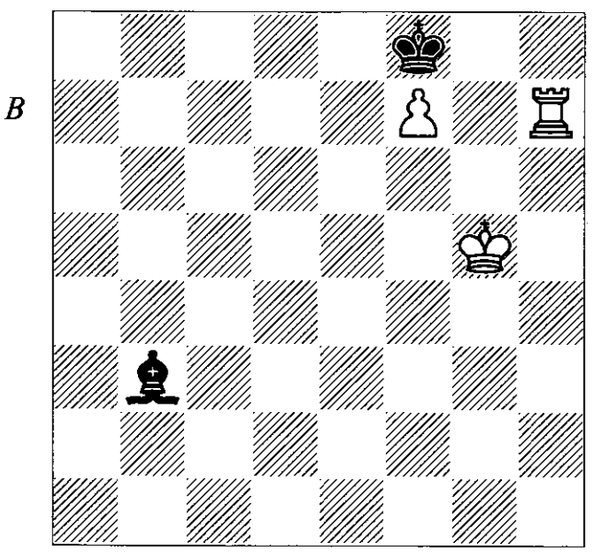
The only move! It is imperative to be able to drive the white king away with a bishop check when it reaches g6 (or e6). 67...♔f7? loses to 68 ♖b7+ ♔e8 69 ♔g6, when the b1-square is under control.



68 ♔g6 ♗f7+!

Needless to say, this move is also the only one.

69 ♔g5 ♗d5 70 ♖h4 ♗b3 71 ♖h8+ ♔f7 72 ♖h7+ ♔f8 73 f7 *(D)*



We reach a similar position to the one in the notes to White's 66th move.

73...♔e7!

Again the only move but enough to draw.

74 ♔g6 ♗c4 75 ♖g7 ♗b3 76 f8♕++ ♔xf8 77 ♔f6

And now?

77...♔e8!

The last important defensive move. Yet again it is the only one to obtain the draw – by getting out of the mating position Black draws easily.

78 ♖e7+ ♔d8 ½-½

This titanic struggle had several phases: right out of the opening Black reacted well after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops. With 16...f4! he opened the f-file and obtained good play thanks to having slightly weakened the white king's position.

Twice did White fail in prophylactic thinking: first when carelessly playing 16 ♘df3?!, and then with the impetuous 25 f4?!, which forced him to give up the exchange. He ended up with an objectively worse position but with good practical chances due to his strong centralized knights.

Black played the time-trouble phase weakly. After the error 35...d4+? came other inaccuracies – 38...♖c2?! and 40...♗h1? – and Black's position became critical.

White seemed to have an easy victory at hand by just pushing his pawns. This makes it easier to understand the error 42 b5?, instead of the idea of exchanging rooks after 42 a5!, even more so when the defence 43...g5!!, conceding a third passed pawn, is so amazing. It hardly seems possible that it can hold.

Still, Black's Herculean defensive task would not have managed to save the game had it not been for the wonderful combination started with 48...♗b7! and culminated with the sacrifice 51...♖xa5!!. In order to find this it was also indispensable to know very well the theoretical endgame that was reached.

The game we shall see next is a fierce struggle where the advantage shifted from one side to the other, and where tenacious defence and error by both sides alternated.

The exchange of the roles of attacker and defender culminated with a wonderful defensive manoeuvre that, against all expectations, allowed Black to reach the draw.

Game 29

Walter Browne – Bobby Fischer

Rovinj/Zagreb 1970

Alekhine Defence, Exchange Variation

1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 d4 d6 4 ♘f3 g6 5 ♗e2

Nowadays 5 ♗c4 is considered more energetic. This was recommended by Fischer in his notes to the game for *Informator 10*.

5...♗g7 6 c4 ♘b6 7 exd6 cxd6 8 ♘c3 0-0 9 0-0 ♘c6 10 ♗e3

This is a normal developing move. Sharper is 10 h3, thwarting Black's idea of putting pressure on the centre.

10...♗g4!

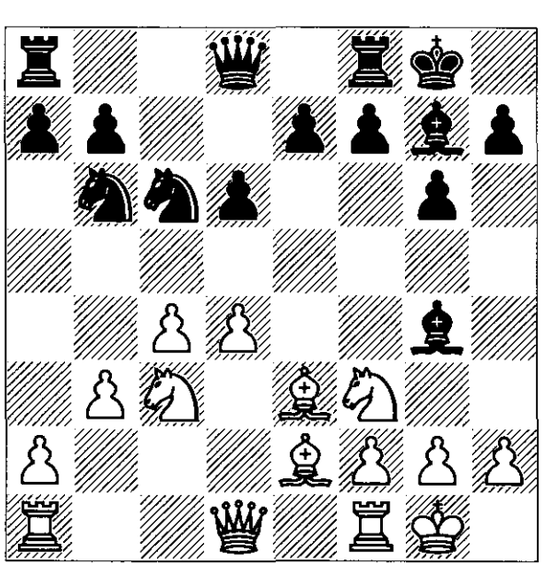
This game was played in the early days of the line, when the plans for both sides were just being born, so the exclamation mark attached by Fischer was justified. It suits the main idea of the Alekhine Defence, namely to provoke the advance of the pawns in order to weaken them. Here the weakened pawn is the one on d4.

Moreover, Black solves at the same time the problem of his c8-bishop, which has no better square, taking into account above all Black's general plan, which we shall see immediately.

11 b3 *(D)*

Defending c4 and so parrying the threat of 11...♗xf3, doubling the pawns.

B



And now? How should Black continue the siege of the white centre?

11...d5!

Black immediately rejects the attack on the d4-pawn by 11...e5?!, for there would follow 12 dxe5!. White gets rid of the target of Black's attack and ends up with his pieces well placed for the opening of lines.

Black decides instead to fix the d4-pawn and prepare to lay siege to it with his pieces. You might be wondering, which other piece?

12 c5

How does Black's idea develop?

12...♘c8!

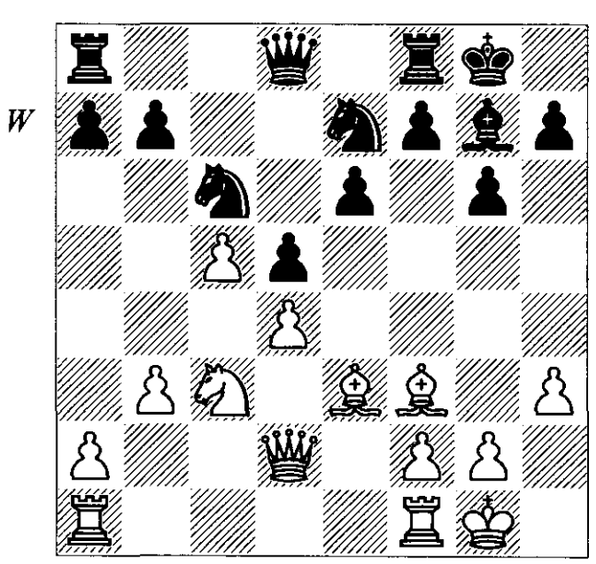
Here we have the answer to which piece is the one that will help in the attack on White's centre. The idea is to play ...e6, followed by ...♘8e7 and ...♘f5.

13 h3?

This reaction is very 'cooperative' – the exchange on f3 is one of Black's ideas, for it gets rid of the defender of d4, and White doesn't gain anything by forcing it.

The drawback of Black's plan was that he had to concede a pawn-majority on the queenside, so it was natural to start the pawns rolling by 13 b4!. Another idea was 13 ♘e1, keeping the best defender of d4, with reasonable play after, e.g., 13...♗xe2 14 ♘xe2 e6 15 ♘f3 ♘8e7 16 b4.

13...♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 e6 15 ♕d2 ♘8e7 *(D)*



16 ♘b5?

This jump into the void will be punished with precision. The threat of 16...♘f5 could not be stopped by 16 g4?!, since this is strongly met by 16...e5!. The more cautious 16 ♘e2 is better.

16...♘f5

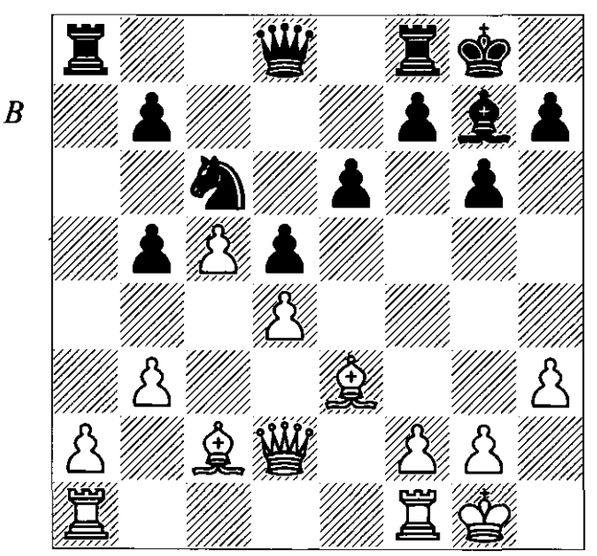
Black strongly threatens 17...a6, capturing the d4-pawn.

17 ♗g4

Trying to eliminate the f5-knight. More radical was 17 g4 but weakening the king's position is a decision that is not to be taken lightly. The jump 17...♘h4 is tempting, trying to exploit this at once, but after 18 ♗e2 e5?! there follows 19 ♗g5! ♗f6 20 ♗xh4 ♗xh4 21 dxe5 ♘xe5 22 ♘d6, and it is White who has the advantage. Black can try to exploit the exposure of the white king with 17...♘xe3! 18 fxe3 – true, it strengthens the white centre, but the white king ends up more exposed too. Black can then try to open up the game with 18...b6 19 b4 ♖b8! 20 ♖ab1 (or 20 ♘d6?! a5 21 a3 ♕g5! {threatening to take on d4} 22 ♖ad1 bxc5 23 bxc5 ♖b3) 20...f5, and a timely ...f4, and/or ...a5, when White will have difficulties in sustaining several fronts with the weaknesses created in his camp.

17...a6 18 ♗xf5 axb5 19 ♗c2 *(D)*

19 ♗g4? would help Black because one of his threats would follow 'for free' – 19...f5! 20 ♗e2 ♕f6, threatening both 21...f4 and the capture of the d4-pawn.



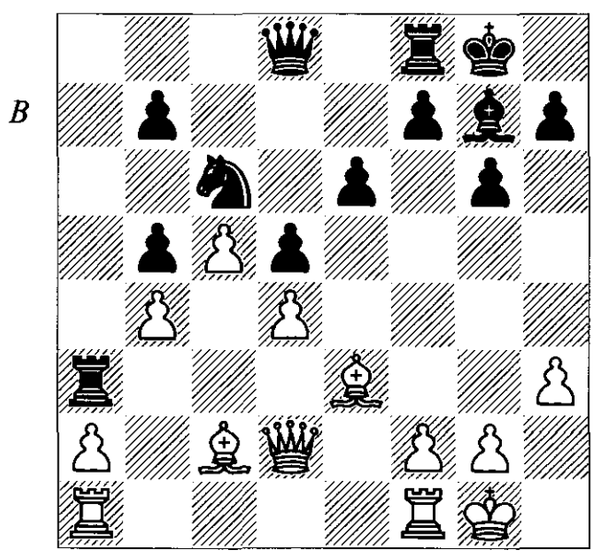
How should Black continue now? The opening of the a-file and the weakness of the long diagonal together with that of the d4-pawn offer Black at least four promising continuations, which have to be evaluated. It is difficult to decide among them because none of them is clearly better than the rest.

19...♖a3

Fixing the weakness of a2, with ideas of increasing the pressure against the pawn. Similarly 19...b4! was possible, avoiding the white resource that follows. Thirdly, since the endgame favours Black, it was possible to propose the exchange of queens with 19...♕a5!, as Fischer recommended.

A fourth possibility is 19...e5, when it is difficult to see how White can keep material equality. Even so it is likely that this hasty material gain is the worst of the four possibilities because the other three, increasing the pressure, are very strong. They win material in the long run too, as White cannot hold the weaknesses of a2 and d4 with his pieces so passive. In all these lines Black's solid and powerful structure plays a very important role.

20 b4!? *(D)*



In an inferior position White seeks extraordinary resources. With the text-move he stops ...b4 and plans the eventual defence of the a2-pawn by ♗b3.

Note that Black also benefits from this advance because the a3-rook increases its activity along the third rank.

20...f5

Now there were two very strong continuations – Fischer carries on without rushing to win material, which he could do by 20...♕h4; e.g., 21 ♖fd1 ♖fa8 22 ♗b3 ♘xd4!.

With the text-move Black threatens the forceful continuation 21...f4 22 ♗xf4 ♗xd4, winning material, as well as the even stronger 21...♕h4 and 21...♕f6, with the idea of playing ...f4.

21 ♗b3

The increase in activity of the a3-rook is felt in the fact that 21 f4?? doesn't work due to 21...♖xe3!.

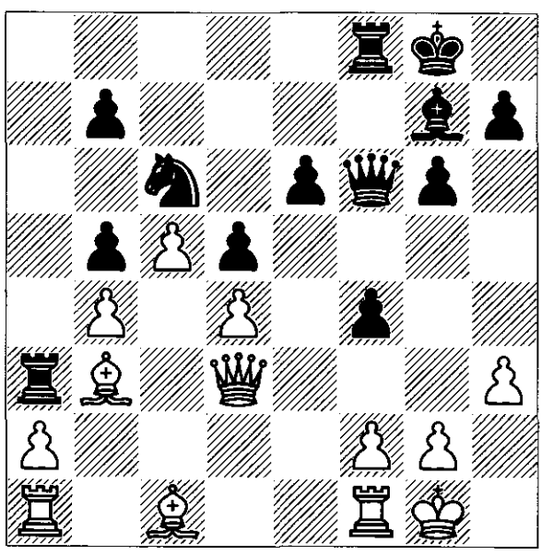
21...♕f6

Threatening not only the d4-pawn but also to win a piece by 22...f4.

22 ♕d3

Defending against the main threat and dreaming about the possibility of capturing on b5 at some point.

22...f4 23 ♗c1 *(D)*



Where should Black move the attacked rook?

23...♖a6?

This is the retreat that may seem most logical, not so much to double the rooks but rather to support the e6-pawn later on.

The other option is 23...♖aa8?, considering that he can get active along the back rank.

But why have we attached question marks to these reasonable-looking moves? Fischer in fact considered the move he played to be a blunder because it misses an elegant possibility to obtain the advantage, namely 23...♖xb3!! 24 axb3 (worse is 24 ♕xb3? ♘xd4 25 ♕d3 f3!, with a decisive attack; e.g., 26 ♖b1 ♕h4 27 ♗d2 fxg2 28 ♔xg2 ♖f3) 24...♕xd4 25 ♕xd4 ♗xd4 26 ♖a2, and here Fischer suggests 26...e5, when Black controls the game with his powerful centre and the strong d4-bishop.

24 ♗b2!

Even with his pieces passive, White has come out less damaged than expected. Now the threat is 25 ♕xb5.

24...f3

The initiative against the white king indirectly defends the b5-pawn: if 25 ♕xb5?, there follows 25...fxg2 26 ♔xg2 ♕f3+ 27 ♔h2 ♘xd4, and the g7-bishop will deliver the decisive blow very soon.

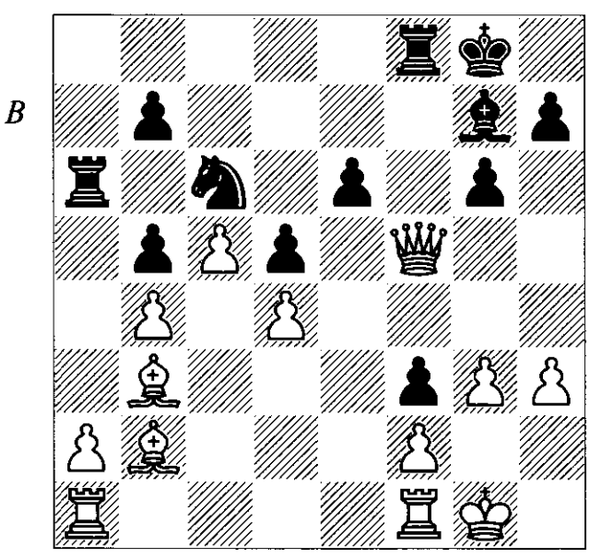
25 g3 ♕f5!

More ambitious than 25...♘xd4 26 ♗xd4 ♕xd4 27 ♕xb5, when there is no advantageous path to be seen for Black. After 27...♖f7 28 ♕e8+ there is nothing better than 28...♖f8 29 ♕b5, for 28...♗f8? 29 b5 ♖e7 30 ♕d8 ♖a3 31 ♖ac1 provides White with a passed pawn without compensation.

Even less promising is 25...♘xb4? 26 ♕xb5 ♕f5 27 ♔h2 ♘c6 28 ♕xb7, and White's ruinous position of a few moves ago has become one in which Black's position hangs by a thread.

The conclusion is that White's position loses much of its sting if the queens are exchanged.

26 ♕xf5 *(D)*



26...gxf5?

Very optimistic – Black wants to carry on with the offensive against the kingside but the idea won't be successful. Both moves win a pawn, but Black's structure is sounder after 26...♖xf5, when the f3-pawn will be safe.

27 ♖ad1 ♘xb4 28 ♖fe1 f4?

This was Black's idea but White can ignore the threat of 29...fxg3. The natural 28...♔f7, defending the base, is better, After, for instance, 29 a3 ♘c6 30 ♖e3 b6 31 cxb6 ♖xb6 32 ♖xf3 b4, Black is slightly better, although only nominally.

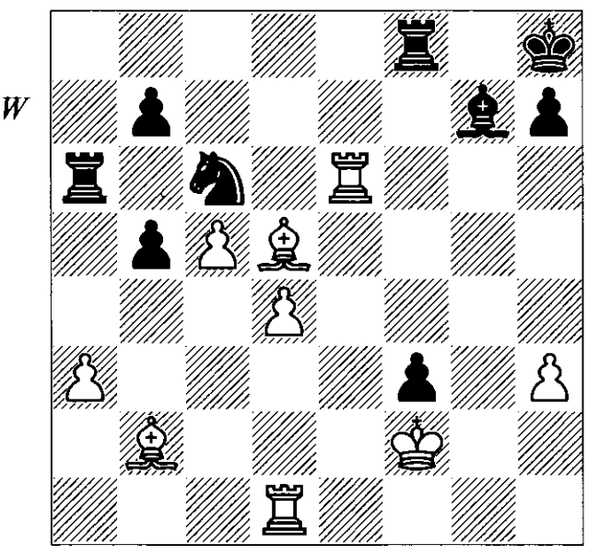
29 a3! ♘c6 30 ♖xe6

The change is dramatic – only weaknesses remain of Black's all-powerful centre and now it is he who must defend.

30...fxg3 31 ♗xd5

31 fxg3 is also good, but there is no reason to object to the text-move.

31...gxf2+ 32 ♔xf2 ♔h8 *(D)*



White's bishop-pair has changed dramatically – now the light-squared bishop is very strong. White has obtained a passed d-pawn and Black's weak structure is now important.

How should White proceed? It is now White who has several promising continuations.

33 ♖e3

Trying to capture the f3-pawn in a few moves. 33 ♖d3 has the same idea but is less strong since Black can complicate the game by 33...b4!; for instance, 34 ♖xf3 ♖aa8 35 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8+ 36 ♔e3 bxa3.

Another idea was 33 ♖d6!?, followed by an attack on the b7-pawn with 34 ♖d7. The course of the game shows that it was also interesting to push the h-pawn as far as possible with 33 h4, but of course this is not the most natural continuation.

33...b4!?

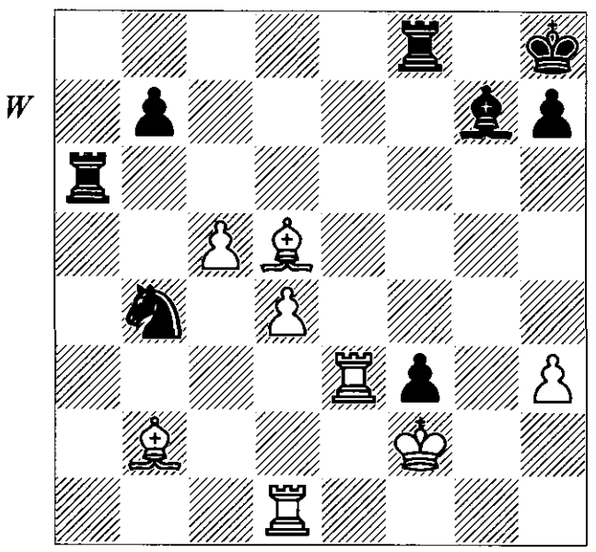
Black has nothing to lose – he has to complicate things, no matter how, and provide the opponent with chances to go wrong.

34 axb4

White reacts well. Another possibility was 34 ♗xc6, when Black probably wouldn't play 34...bxa3?! 35 ♗xb7 axb2 36 ♗xa6 ♗xd4 37

c6 ♖f7, because White can regroup and convert his material advantage with 38 ♗d3 ♖e7 39 ♖de1 ♖f7 40 ♗e4 ♔g7 41 ♖d1. 34...bxc6 35 axb4 ♖a2 36 ♖b3 ♗f6 gives more chances of complicating the play.

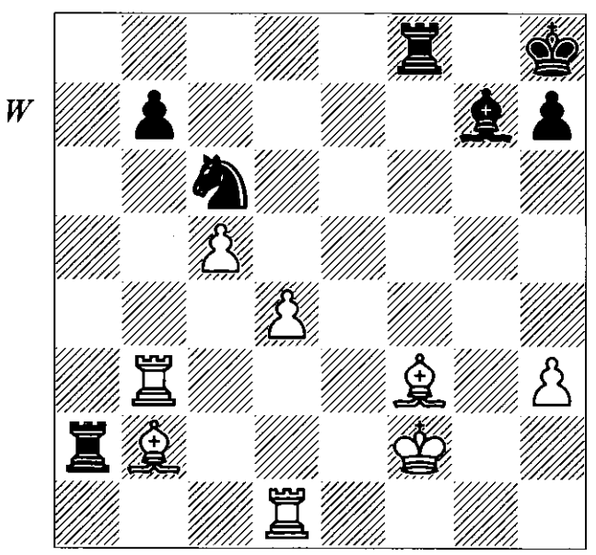
34...♘xb4 *(D)*



35 ♗xf3

Getting rid of a potentially dangerous enemy. The pin is annoying but White plans to get his king out of the f-file soon. Instead, 35 ♗xb7?! ♖a2 36 ♖b3 (not 36 ♖d2? ♗h6) 36...♘c2! 37 ♖d2 ♖xb2 38 ♖xb2 ♗xd4+ 39 ♖xd4 ♘xd4 40 c6 ♘e6 wasn't as conclusive.

35...♖a2 36 ♖b3 ♘c6 *(D)*



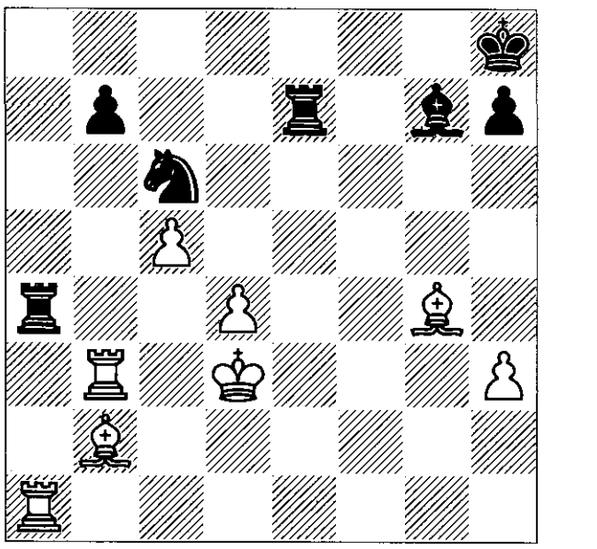
37 ♔g3

Getting out of both the uncomfortable f-file and an eventual check on d4. The king, however, won't find a safe refuge on the kingside. Not that it is seeking one, because the most useful destination of the king is in the centre, where it can help support the weak pawn on d4. Here we have another advantageous factor for White, since the black king isn't taking part in the fight.

37...♖g8 38 ♔f4 ♖f8+ 39 ♔e4 ♖f7

Attacking the king with 39...♖e8+ 40 ♔d3 ♖d8 is insufficient too. There could follow 41 ♗xc6 bxc6 42 ♖b7, one of the ideas being 43 ♗c3 and 44 ♖c7.

40 ♗g4 ♖e7+ 41 ♔d3 ♖a4 42 ♖a1! *(D)*



White has a winning position, as Fischer acknowledged: thanks to the centralization of the white king, the extra passed pawn on d4 is protected, and after a few regrouping moves, it will be ready to advance.

We are at a stage when it is not possible to find a satisfactory defence for Black, for there is none. Instead, he has to find one that provides practical chances of saving the game. How should Black create practical problems for White?

42...♖xd4+!

Anything other than reconciling himself to the exchange of rooks! White could then regroup in order to push the passed pawn comfortably, after first laying siege to the weak pawn on b7.

43 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 44 ♖a8+ ♔g7

Black is the exchange down and his position is still lost but it no longer is a technical task without complications, as it would be had Black played 42...♖xa1?. The passed pawn has disappeared and only two pawns are left for each

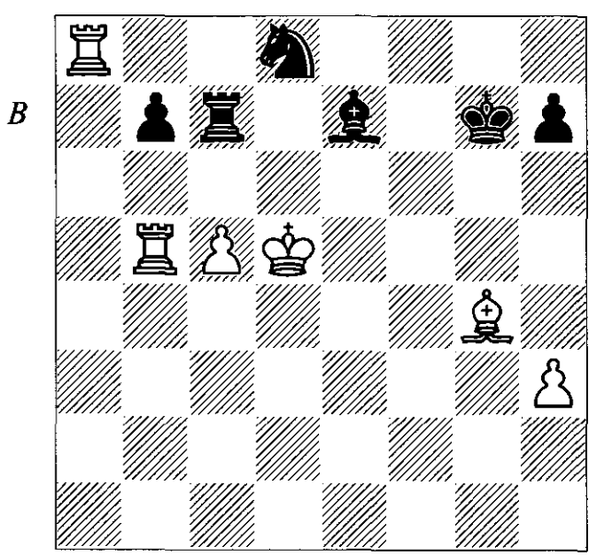
side. Black hopes that the weakness on c5 compensates for the one on b7.

One of the practical problems is that White has many moves to try to carry out the plan of capturing the b7-pawn.

45 ♖b5 ♗f2 46 ♗f5 ♘e5+ 47 ♔c3 ♗e1+ 48 ♔d4 ♘c6+ 49 ♔c4 ♗h4 50 ♗c8 ♘d8 51 ♖a2 ♖c7 52 ♗g4 ♗e7 53 ♔d5 ♘c6 54 ♖ab2 ♘d8

Black has managed to regroup acceptably – he has defended his weak pawn, put pressure on the one on c5, and is ready to put up stubborn resistance.

55 ♖b1 ♗f8 56 ♖1b2 ♗e7 57 ♖g2 ♔h8 58 ♖a2 ♔g7 59 ♖a8 *(D)*



Heading to b8. The destiny of the b7-pawn seems sealed but Black finds a way to hold out, namely to regroup in order to drive the rook away when it arrives on b8.

59...♗h4! 60 ♖b8 ♖f7 61 ♖b2

There is nothing direct – if 61 ♗c8, there follows 61...♗g3, and then 62...♖c7.

61...♔h6 62 ♖b6+ ♔g7 63 ♖b3 *(D)*

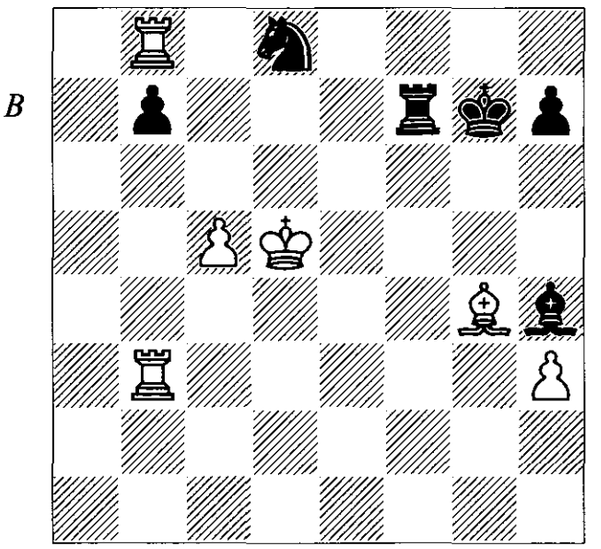
Only now that g3 is under control does the threat of 64 ♗c8 seem very strong – how can Black keep creating practical difficulties?

63...h5!

Counterattack! This pawn is destined to distract White from his queenside play in the future. Needless to say, it cannot be captured because of the check on f5.

64 ♗c8 ♗e7 65 ♖b5!

Defending the vital c5-pawn. Not 65 ♗xb7 ♖f5+, when Black takes a big defensive step forward.



65...♖f3!

The complement of 63...h5! – now that the white rook has left the third rank, the target is the h3-pawn.

66 ♗xb7 ♖xh3 67 c6 ♖c3

Despite Black's tenacious resistance, White has delivered an almost definitive blow in the fight by obtaining a passed pawn. Meanwhile Black's own pawn is not bothersome yet.

How is White to exploit this?

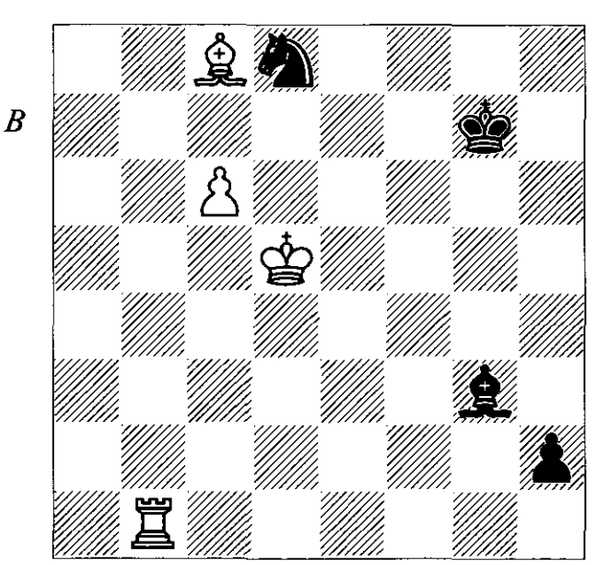
68 ♖a8?

Fischer indicated a quick method: 68 ♖c8! (threatening to push the pawn, followed by ♗c6) 68...♘f7 69 ♖c7 ♔f6 70 ♖b1, and the threat of 71 ♖f1+ forces Black to weaken his defensive wall.

68...h4!

The passed pawn starts marching and the obstacles to White's victory increase.

69 ♖a4 h3 70 ♖c4 h2 71 ♖b1 ♖xc4 72 ♔xc4 ♗d6 73 ♔d5 ♗g3 74 ♗c8! *(D)*

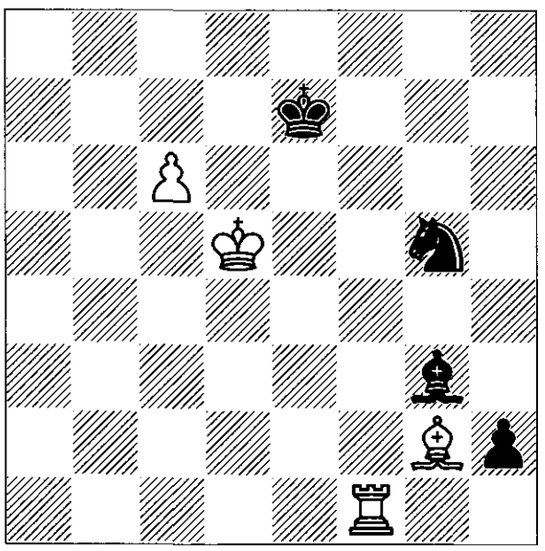


In order to stop the black pawn and support his own one from g2.

74...♔f7

The black king also heads for the queenside to help control the white pawn.

75 ♗h3 ♔e7 76 ♖c1 ♔f6 77 ♖a1 ♔e7 78 ♖f1 ♘f7 79 ♗g2 ♘g5! *(D)*



Seeking to blockade with ...♘e6-c7.

80 ♔c5

The king is heading for b6 to support the pawn advance.

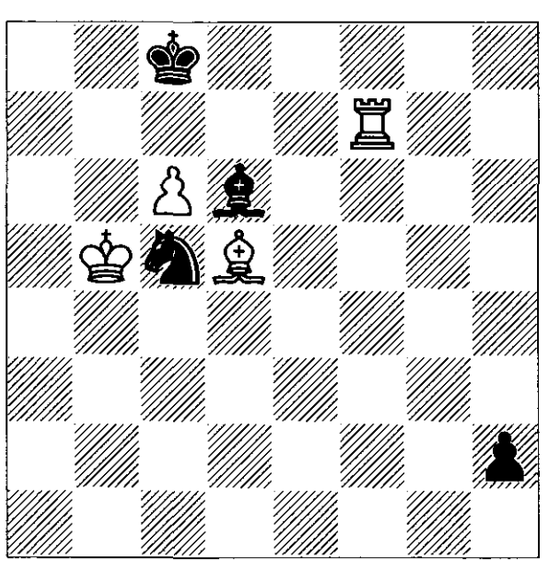
80...♘e6+ 81 ♔b6 ♗c7+?

Much more resilient was 81...♘c7! 82 ♖f3 ♗d6, obtaining the ideal coordination. The pawn would then be firmly blockaded.

82 ♔b7 ♗d6 83 ♗d5! ♘c5+

83...♘c7? is no longer possible due to 84 ♖f7+, winning.

84 ♔b6 ♘a4+ 85 ♔a5 ♘c5 86 ♔b5 ♔d8 87 ♖f7 ♔c8 *(D)*



The critical moment has come: the pawn can at last advance – victory seems within reach.

88 c7?(?)

It is amazing that after this move, White's victory slips away, from a practical perspective, if not a theoretical one (the best he can achieve is ♖+♗ vs ♗+♘ with opposite bishops, which is a win, but often requires more than 50 moves). Black's sequence of defensive moves is extraordinary and deeply hidden.

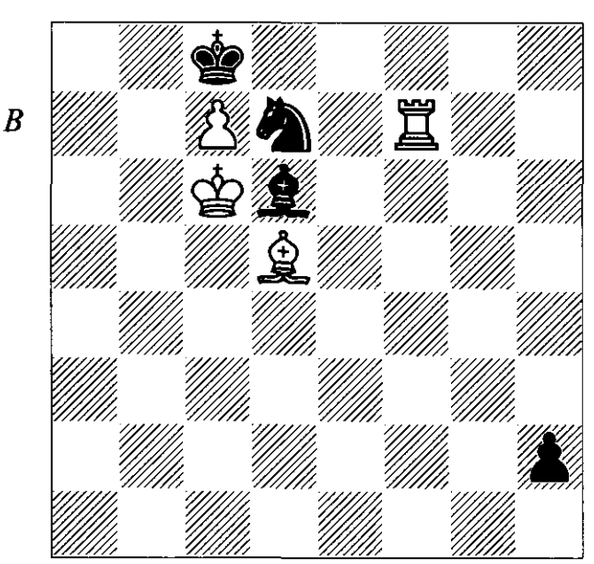
Browne needed to apply the well-known 'do not hurry' principle. As Fischer showed, with 88 ♖h7! he could control the advance of the black passed pawn and rule out any tactical resources: 88...♘d3 89 ♗e6+ ♔b8 (or 89...♔d8 90 ♖d7+ ♔e8 91 ♗f7+ ♔f8 92 ♗d5, attacking the bishop and threatening 93 c7) 90 ♖b7+ ♔a8 91 ♗d5, winning.

88...♘d7!! 89 ♔c6? *(D)*

Now the game definitely can't be won.

89 ♖h7! is best, when White can achieve the aforementioned ending ♖+♗ vs ♗+♘ by 89...♔xc7 90 ♗c6 h1♕! 91 ♗xh1 ♔d8! 92 ♔c6 ♘f6, which the tablebase tells us is mate in 51 moves with perfect play.

After 89 ♗e6?! Black must avoid 89...h1♕?? 90 ♗xd7+ ♔xc7 91 ♗c6+, but 89...♗e7! enables him to bring the rook closer. After 90 ♖xe7? (90 ♗xd7+? ♔xd7 91 ♖h7 h1♕! reaches the drawn endgame of ♖ vs ♗) 90...h1♕ 91 ♗xd7+ ♔xc7 92 ♗c6+ ♔d6 (this is the difference: now the king attacks the white rook) 93 ♖d7+ ♔e6 Black draws. So White must settle for ♖+♗ vs ♗+♘ by 90 ♖h7, but in this version the distance to mate is longer.



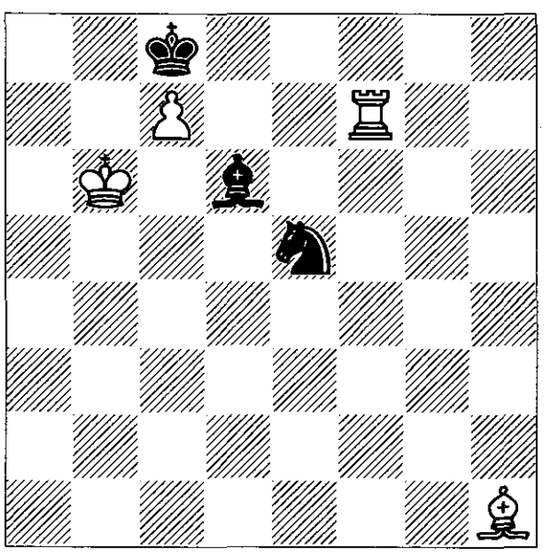
The difficulties haven't ended yet – how should Black defend now?

89...h1♕!!

The only defence. The knight fork on e5 is a defensive resource that didn't exist with the rook on h7 but now 89...♘e5+?? doesn't work, though not because of 90 ♔xd6?? ♘xf7+ 91 ♗xf7 h1♕ 92 ♗e6+ ♔b7 93 c8♕+ ♔a7, when White cannot win, as Fischer noted and the tablebase corroborates. An important resource is that 94 ♕c5+ ♔b8 95 ♕c7+ ♔a8 96 ♗d5+ doesn't win due to 96...♕xd5+! with stalemate.

Victory is achieved through 90 ♔b6!!. The threat is 91 ♗e6+, forcing 90...♗c5+ so that the king doesn't defend the pawn, and after 91 ♔xc5 ♘xf7 92 ♔b6, the threats of ♗b7+ and ♗e6# cannot be parried for long because Black ends up in zugzwang: 92...♘d8 93 ♗e4 ♔d7 (if 93...♘e6, there follows 94 ♗f5) 94 ♗f3 ♘e6 95 ♗c6+ ♔c8 96 ♗b7+, winning.

90 ♗xh1 ♘e5+ 91 ♔b6 *(D)*



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91...♗c5+!

Not, of course, 91...♘xf7?? because of 92 ♗b7+.

92 ♔xc5 ♘xf7 93 ♔b6 ♘d6

The knight is not forced to go to d8, since there are no checks on the h3-c8 diagonal. Black's defensive task is simple with the knight well placed.

94 ♗d5 ♔d7 95 ♗c6+ ♔c8 96 ♗d5 ♔d7 97 ♗b3 ♘c8+

With the transfer of the knight to e7, the Herculean defence culminates successfully.

98 ♔b7 ♘e7 ½-½

This tremendous fight went through a number of very different stages. Black got good play early on with key moves such as 10...♗g4! and the plan of laying siege to the d4-pawn by 11...d5!, 12...♘c8! and finally 16...♘f5. This was helped by White's inaccuracies, 13 h3? and 16 ♘b5?, giving Black a very large advantage.

Later on with several very strong moves to choose among, Black played weakly, allowing White to fight on, in particular by overlooking the nice exchange sacrifice 23...♖xb3!!. With 26...gxf5? and 28...f4? Black not only lost the advantage but ended up worse.

White made the most of his defensive resources, resisting with 20 b4!? and 24 ♗b2!, and later on gained the advantage with 29 a3!, after which Black's powerful centre disappeared. Then the two passive bishop became masters of the board, with an extra pawn to boot.

Another critical moment occurred after 42 ♖a1!. White obtained a winning position beyond doubt but the moment had arrived for Black to get practical defensive chances by sacrificing the exchange with 42...♖xd4+!.

It is amazing that Black didn't lose – his position was hanging by a thread, even after doing his utmost to resist, namely blockading the passed pawn, laying siege to the king and creating counterplay with his own passed pawn by 63...h5! and 65...♖f3!.

White took his time and played at will, keeping a winning advantage, which he let slip away by overlooking the relatively simple 68 ♖c8!. Then the natural move 88 c7?(?) made the win only a theoretical possibility, and after 89 ♔c6? Black could prove a draw. True, Black needed to find 'miraculous' resources more typical of an artistic ending than a real game, such as the beautiful 88...♘d7!!, 89...h1♕!! and 91...♗c5+!.

In the previous two main games the worse side sought his defensive possibilities in the endgame, reaching a theoretical ending in Game 28 and one with practical chances in Game 29.

In Game 30, we shall witness a defence that resembles the first ones in the book, with successful resources that evoke Lasker's style. But first we are going to see a game that will help us understand what we shall see later on.

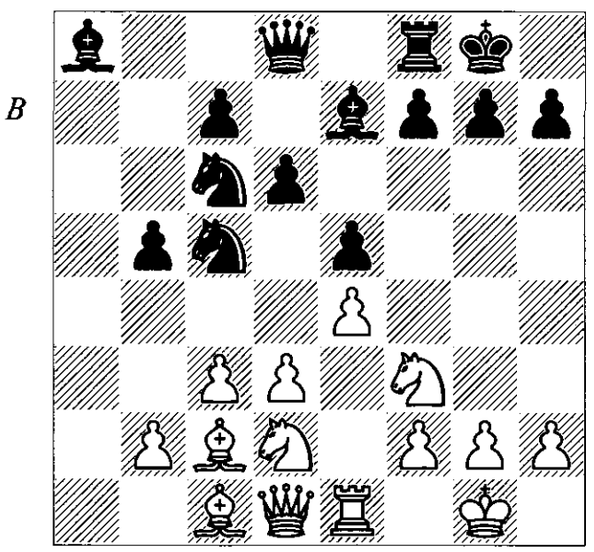
Supplementary Game 30.1

Garry Kasparov – Nigel Short

PCA World Ch match (game 7), London 1993

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4 ♗b7 9 d3 d6 10 ♘bd2 ♘d7 11 c3 ♘c5 12 axb5 axb5 13 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 14 ♗c2 *(D)*



Despite its deceptive appearance – not much seems to be happening – the position is very complex, not only tactically, but also in the variety of plans for both sides. It's full of apparently insignificant subtleties concerning the move-order and the arrangement of the pieces. Let's try to understand part of what is happening.

14...d5?! is not advisable because after 15 exd5 ♕xd5 16 d4! all the white pieces come to life. Black cannot capture twice on d4 because of the loose e7-bishop, and after 16...exd4 17 cxd4 ♘d7 there follows 18 ♘e4 with great activity. The isolated pawn is not a weakness – it rather threatens to advance to d5, winning more space.

The game continued:

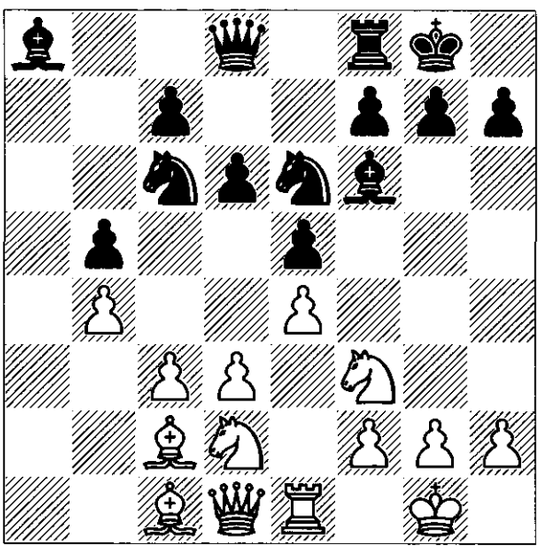
14...♗f6

Now if 15 ♘f1, there would follow 15...d5! in good circumstances; e.g., 16 exd5 ♕xd5 17 ♘e3 ♕d7 18 b4 ♘a4!, and the black pieces are ideally placed.

15 b4

With the intention of thwarting Black's central push momentarily.

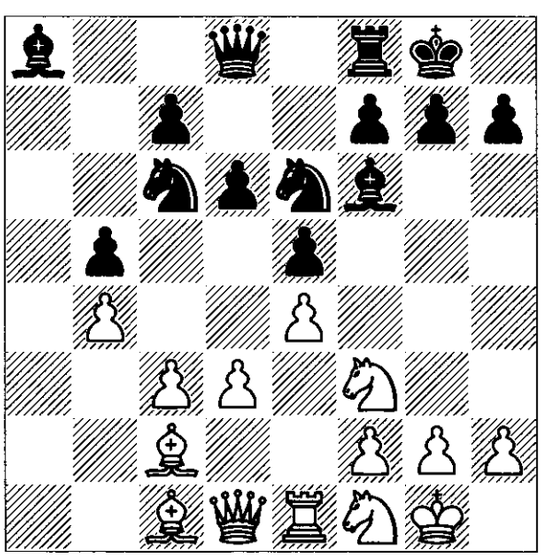
15...♘e6 *(D)*



What is the best move now?

16 ♘f1! *(D)*

Kasparov didn't continue with the natural 16 ♗b3 because Black would obtain reasonable play by 16...♘e7!, again preparing ...d5. He gave as an example the line 17 ♘f1 d5 18 ♘g3 ♘g6! 19 ♘h5 dxe4 20 dxe4 ♕xd1 21 ♘xf6+ gxf6 22 ♗xd1 ♘gf4 23 ♗c2 ♖d8, threatening 24...♘d3, and the black pieces are once more very well placed, while the doubled pawns are not a serious weakness because they cannot be exploited.



16...♗b7?!

Renouncing the counterblow ...d5. Instead of this, Kasparov recommended freeing Black's game by 16...d5!?, with just a slight advantage to White after 17 exd5 ♕xd5 18 ♘e3 ♕d8! 19 ♘g4 e4! 20 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 21 dxe4 ♕xc3 22 ♖e3 ♕f6 23 ♕e1 ♘cd4.

17 ♘e3 g6 18 ♗b3 ♗g7

The central stability allowed White to initiate a kingside attack with his next move.

19 h4

Kasparov still suggested as best occupying the centre by 19 ♘c2! ♘e7 20 d4.

19...♗c8 20 h5 ♔h8 21 ♘d5

White's superiority is clear. The game was decided by an attack on the black king.

Game 30

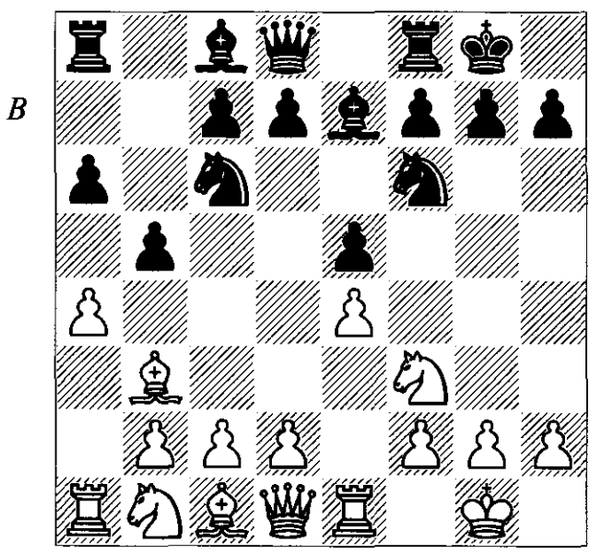
Garry Kasparov – Veselin Topalov

Linares 2004

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Anti-Marshall

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4 *(D)*

The 'Anti-Marshall' lines preventing the variation 8 c3 d5 were marginal continuations until the beginning of the 1990s. Nowadays they have wider support and are very popular at all levels. This coincided with the good reputation of the Marshall Attack and the successes of Aronian, Grishchuk, Adams, and even Kramnik and Leko, among other top masters. Kasparov himself gave the Anti-Marshall a big boost by using it, successfully, in his London match against Short in 1993.



8...♗b7 9 d3

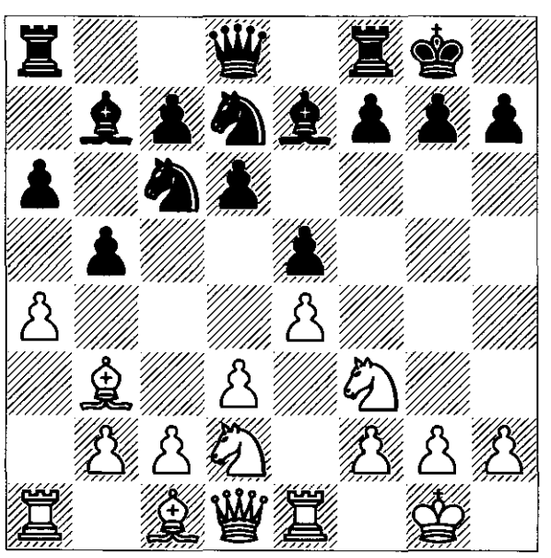
This advance doesn't mean White renounces the occupation of the centre by d4 – he just leaves the possibility open for another occasion.

9...d6

Conversely this move doesn't force Black either to renounce once and for all the idea of occupying the centre with a future ...d5, but clearly this needs more preparation.

Another option is 9...♖e8 without playing ...d6 yet. Even a Marshall Attack of sorts in worse conditions has been played occasionally with 9...d5?! but naturally the developing move 9 d3 is much more useful than the 8 c3 of the main variation of the Marshall Attack.

10 ♘bd2 ♘d7 *(D)*



11 c3

Kasparov said that he had rejected 11 ♘f1 because Black can reply 11...♘d4!, when 12 ♗a2, keeping the tension, is met by 12...bxa4!, and Black doesn't have the usual problems of lack of mobility after 13 ♘g3 ♘c5 14 ♗e3 ♗f6. Kasparov gave as an example the line 12

♘xd4 exd4 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 15 ♘g3 ♘c5, and again the simplifications give Black an agile game.

11...♘c5 12 axb5 axb5

It is not convincing to eliminate the 'Spanish bishop' by 12...♘xb3?! 13 bxc6 ♘xd2 (not 13...♘xa1?? 14 cxb7 ♖b8 15 ♕a4, winning) 14 cxb7 ♘xf3+ 15 ♕xf3, when Black must play 15...♖a7. He even has to waste another tempo before he can win the pawn back. White can capitalize on this by creating tension in the centre with 16 d4, or on the kingside with 16 ♕g4 or 16 ♕h5, followed by 17 ♖e3.

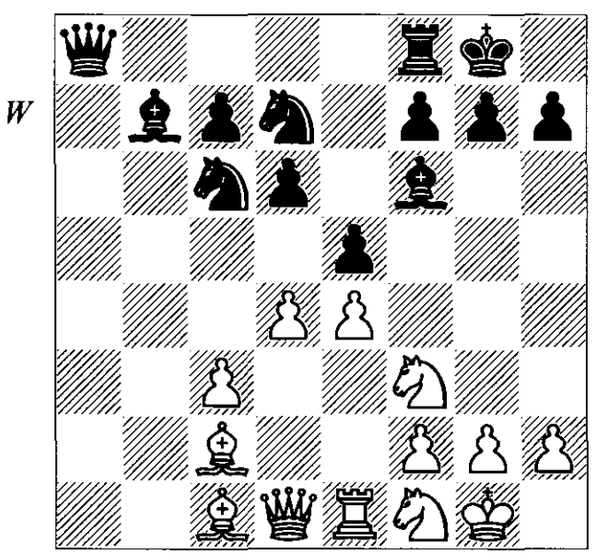
13 ♖xa8 ♕xa8

The capture 13...♗xa8 was made in Kasparov-Short, PCA World Ch match (game 7), London 1993, which we saw briefly in Supplementary Game 30.1.

14 ♗c2 b4

Rather than preventing d4 with 14...♗f6, in a similar fashion to Short against Kasparov, Black prefers to open lines on the queenside, which will grant him more play.

15 d4 bxc3 16 bxc3 ♘d7 17 ♘f1 ♗f6 *(D)*



18 d5

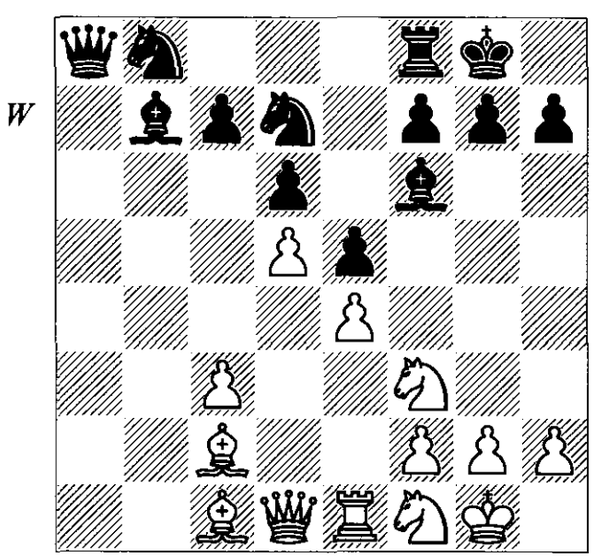
A critical decision. White resolves the central tension and closes the game with gain of tempo, at the same time nullifying the black bishops. But not everything is rosy: the loss of central tension means that Black no longer has to watch out for the game opening up and therefore has more freedom to manoeuvre.

The virtues of the opening of the queenside attained by 14...b4 are felt in that the natural 18 ♘e3 can be met by 18...exd4 19 cxd4 ♘b4, and if 20 ♗b1, tactics enable the black pieces to survive after 20...♗xe4! 21 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 22 ♕a4; for instance, 22...♘c6 23 ♘d2 ♘b6 24 ♘xe4 (24 ♕b5 ♘xd4! 25 ♕xb6? is not possible due to 25...♘f3+! 26 ♔h1 ♕f4, winning) 24...♘xa4 25 ♘xf6+ gxf6 26 ♘d5 ♔g7.

This is just a sample line. There are important alternatives, such as 20 ♘f5 or later on 22...♘d3, but the evaluation doesn't change substantially.

18...♘cb8! *(D)*

Black will regroup his knights to c5 and d7. Kasparov was expecting 18...♘e7, which he was planning to meet by 19 ♗e3, considering that White enjoys a slight advantage because he is ready to play on the queenside. In *Informator 90* he also suggested 18...♘a5 19 ♘e3 ♗a6 but in the game Black preferred to have the a-file cleared.



Of course Black is aware of the absence of pieces defending his king but considers that the counterplay on the queenside will provide him sufficient defence. The exclamation mark attached by Kasparov rewards Topalov's accurate evaluation.

19 h4

White wants to use the h-pawn as a battering-ram. Another typical idea in the Ruy Lopez is 19 g4 followed by ♘g3.

19...♘c5 20 ♘g3 ♗c8

The bishop no longer played any role on b7. It now controls f5 and can be brought to g4 before playing ...♘bd7.

21 ♘g5

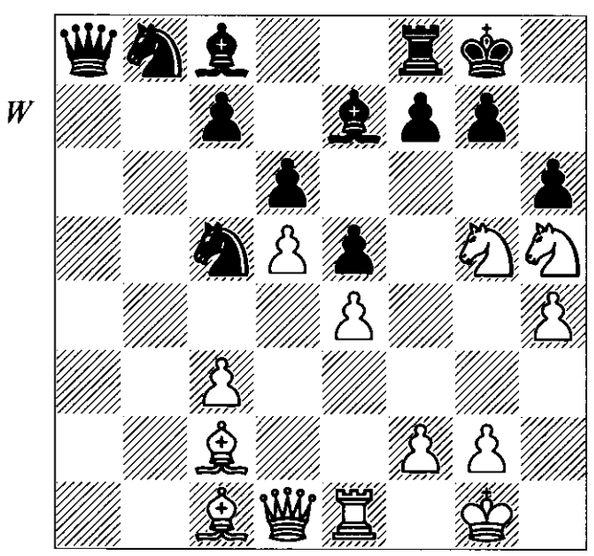
White avoids 21...♗g4 and launches an attack with all the available pieces. In order to do this it is important, as we shall see, to clear the third rank so that the e1-rook can join in the offensive.

21...h6

Black cannot passively allow the accumulation of white forces against his king. For instance if 21...♘bd7?, there can follow 22 ♘f5 and it is already too late for 22...h6 due to 23 ♕h5 hxg5 24 hxg5 ♗d8 25 ♖e3, with a mating attack.

22 ♘h5 ♗e7! *(D)*

It is not possible to capture the piece: if 22...hxg5? 23 ♘xf6+ gxf6 24 hxg5, Black is powerless against the invasion by the white queen, soon to be joined by the rook; e.g., 24...fxg5 25 ♕h5 f6 26 ♕g6+ ♔h8, and here the e1-rook gets into play with 27 g4 followed by 28 ♔g2 and ♖h1#.



The eventual capture of the g5-knight would be carried out now in optimal conditions. How should White continue the attack? Is it possible to bring more forces to bear on the black king?

Tactics are the fundamental element during the next stage of the game.

23 ♘h3!

A momentary retreat. Kasparov commented that it was not possible to add fuel to the fire with 23 f4?! for Black repels the attack after 23...hxg5 24 hxg5. Here there are many possibilities: among the ones Kasparov points out there is 24...♕a1 25 f5 ♕xc3 (threatening 26...♕d4+), when after 26 ♔h2 g6 the attack doesn't seem to compensate for the piece. There are more lines, such as 26 ♘xg7, when it would be risky to play 26...♔xg7 27 ♖e3 ♕a1 28 f6+ ♔g8 29 fxe7 ♖e8 30 ♔h2! ♖xe7 31 ♖a3, followed by 32 ♕h5, but Black can simply give up the pawn and carry out his threat, 26...♕d4+ – without queens the compensation would again be insufficient.

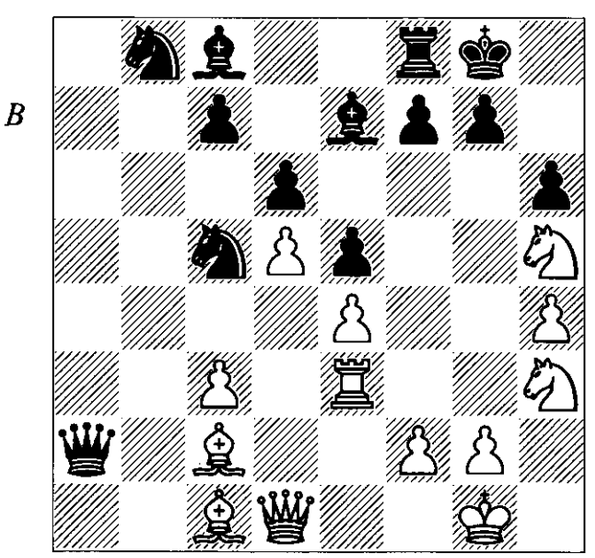
23...♕a2!

The virtue of having left the a-file open is felt here: the queen attacks the c2-bishop and stops White's attack.

With his king so exposed, Black has to be very careful – the attack must not be underestimated. If 23...♗xh4?, White wins by 24 ♘xg7! with a decisive attack after both 24...♔xg7 25 ♕h5 and 24...♗xh3 25 ♗xh6 ♗d7 26 ♘f5.

24 ♖e3 *(D)*

The threat of ♘xg7 hangs over the position. It is possible to prepare it with 24 ♕d2 but Black can hold out; e.g., 24...♗xh3! (simplifying and obtaining control of g5) 25 gxh3 ♗xh4 26 ♕e2 (if 26 ♘xg7, there follows 26...♗g5!, and Black wins after 27 f4 ♗xf4 28 ♕g2 ♔h8) 26...♗g5 27 ♗xg5 hxg5 28 h4, and now the time has come for Black's counterattack – after 28...♘bd7 29 hxg5 ♖b8!, and it is he now who seizes control.



Now the threat is 25 ♖g3, with dire consequences. How should Black defend?

24...g6?

This weakening of the king's position should have led to defeat. It is noteworthy that Kasparov hadn't seen 24...♗xh4!, after which there is

nothing advantageous. White would have had to settle for a draw by 25 ♘xg7 ♔xg7 26 ♕h5 ♕xc2 (26...♗g5? is not possible because White mates after 27 ♘xg5 ♕xc2 28 ♘e6+) 27 ♖g3+ ♗xg3 28 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 29 ♕g5+.

25 ♖g3

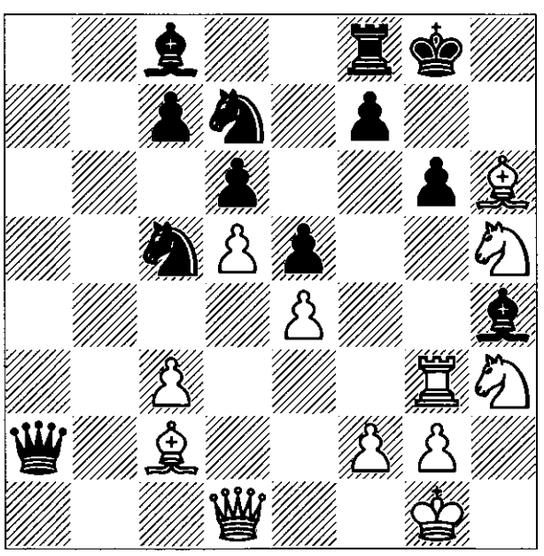
The superiority of the white forces on the kingside is overwhelming and the combinations against the black king develop naturally.

The black queen cannot help with the defence, whereas the white queen seems to be on the brink of delivering a decisive blow.

25...♘bd7

It's already too late for 25...♗xh4. As Kasparov points out, White wins with 26 ♕d2! g5 (if 26...♗xg3?, then 27 ♘f6+, and mate in two) 27 ♘xg5! ♗xg3 28 ♘f6+ ♔h8 (or 28...♔g7 29 ♘e6+!, and the mate is similar but comes sooner: 29...fxe6 30 ♕xh6+ ♔f7 31 ♕h7+ ♔xf6 32 ♗g5+! ♔xg5 33 ♕g7+) 29 ♘xf7+! ♔g7 30 ♕xh6+ ♔xf7 31 ♕h7+ ♔xf6 32 ♗g5+!, forcing mate: 32...♔xg5 33 ♕g7+ ♔h5 34 ♗d1+ ♗g4 35 ♗xg4+ ♔h4 36 fxg3+ ♔xg3 37 ♗f5+ ♔f4 38 ♕h6+ ♔g3 39 ♕g5#.

26 ♗xh6 ♗xh4 *(D)*



What is now the best way to continue White's attack?

27 ♖g4!

Effectively combining active moves with quiet ones, although this is a 'free' move because it attacks the bishop. It was logical to seek something immediate, but the attack is still not ripe for 27 ♖xg6+? fxg6 28 ♕g4, when White has no more than a draw after 28...♔f7 29 ♕xh4 ♖h8 30 ♘g5+ ♔g8 31 ♘h3! (not 31 ♘f3? ♕a1+ 32 ♔h2 ♖xh6 33 ♕d8+ ♘f8, winning) 31...♔f7.

27...♗e7

Now White must calculate accurately and choose among at least three promising continuations.

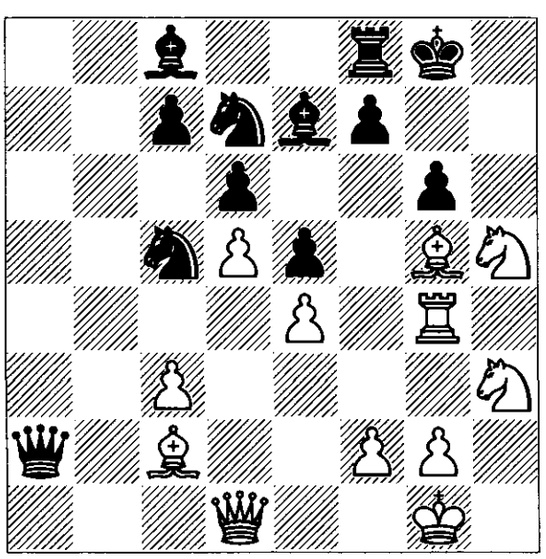
28 ♗g5! *(D)*

At the start of the time-trouble White plays the safest continuation, which is also the strongest. The assault 28 ♘g5 keeps an advantage but doesn't make the most of the position. Kasparov indicated 28...♘f6 29 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 30 ♖h4 and now:

a) 30...♖e8? wouldn't do because the accumulation of white forces on the kingside is unstoppable after 31 ♕f3 ♘d7 32 ♗d1 ♕d2 33 ♖g4 ♗a6 34 ♘xf7! ♕e1+ 35 ♔h2 ♔xf7 36 ♖xg6! ♔e7 (or 36...♖g8 37 ♖xg8 ♔xg8 38 ♗a4, regaining the piece with a decisive material advantage) 37 ♗a4 ♕e2 38 ♕f5 ♗b5 39 ♗xb5 ♕xb5 40 ♗g5, and White wins back his investment with good returns.

b) 30...♕b2! (sacrificing the exchange so that the queen can come back to the defence) 31 ♗xf8 ♗xg5 32 ♖h1 ♕xc3, when White is somewhat better but due to the simplification the black king has come out pretty well.

The main alternative was 28 ♗g7, when Kasparov's main line was 28...♘f6 29 ♗xf6 ♗xg4 30 ♕xg4 ♗xf6 31 ♘xf6+ ♔g7 32 ♘h5+ ♔h7 33 ♗d1 ♕d2 (not 33...gxh5? 34 ♕xh5+ ♔g7 35 ♕g5+ ♔h7, and the bishop comes into play with demolishing effect by 36 ♗g4) 34 ♘g3, and the black king is still very exposed.



28...♗xg5 29 ♘xg5 *(D)*

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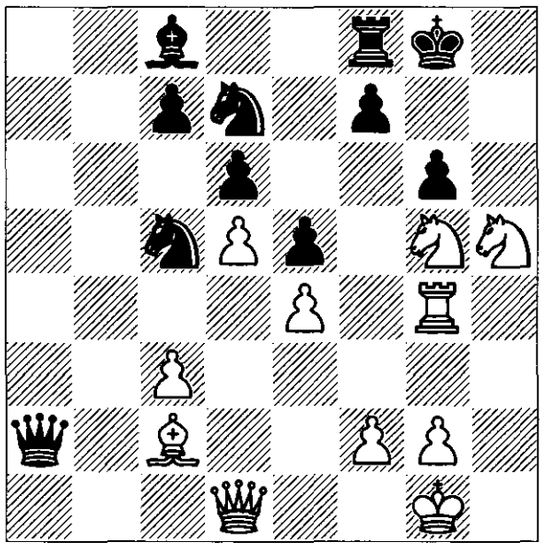


The evaluation of the game is clear – Black is lost. After a normal course of events, such as 29...♕b2, trying to help the defence with the queen as with 30...♕b2! in the previous note, there follows 30 ♖g3!, when White can improve his position and then invade with his queen. He would have the sacrifice ♘e6 or ♘xf7 as his main tactical element to open up the defences of the black king. Let's see some defensive tries:

a) The problem with 30...♗a6 is that creating counterplay on the queenside requires too many tempi, so it can be considered a loss of time. Then:

a1) 31 ♘e6 is tempting, preparing the ground for an invasion by the queen. After 31...fxe6? 32 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 33 ♕g4 (threatening 34 ♖g7+ and 35 ♕g5, which would follow after, for instance, 33...exd5) 33...♕c1+ 34 ♔h2 exd5 35 ♖g7+ ♔e8, there follows the nice blow 36 ♗a4!, winning. It is more resilient to carry on with the idea of bringing the f8-rook to the queenside by 31...♗c4!, when 32 ♘xf8 ♔xf8 is not clearly better for White.

a2) Another attacking idea is to prepare the invasion by 31 ♔h2!, clearing the first rank and preventing both ...♕c1+ and a future pin after ...♖a8-a1. This is a slower idea but here, unlike in the other attacking lines, there is no hurry because White hasn't given up any material nor is there any counterplay by Black. The importance of eliminating Black's defensive resources will be seen on various occasions later on. After 31...♗c4 32 ♖h3 (with ideas of ♕g4-h4) 32...♖a8 33 ♕f3 White has managed to bring all his forces to the kingside, and Black is defenceless; e.g., 33...f5 34 ♘e6 ♕xc2 35 ♕g3 ♔f7 36 ♘hf4! with a quick mate.

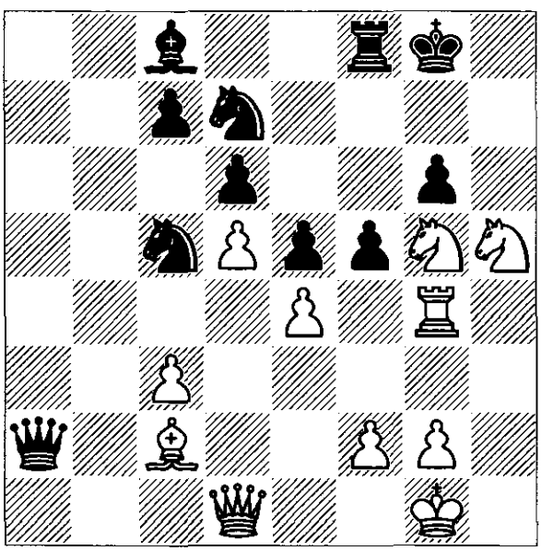
b) The same recipe, playing without any hurry, is valid against 30...♖e8. The immediate sacrifices 31 ♘xf7 and 31 ♘e6 are worth considering but Black is helpless after 31 ♔h2!. The illustrative line given by Kasparov is 31...♖e7 32 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 33 ♕g4, and there is no defence – 33...♕c1, in order to defend with ...♕h6, no longer comes with check.

As Matthew Sadler put it in a similar situation, "What to do? Resign? Cry?"

After ruling out Sadler's initial suggestions, how should one actually look for practical chances? It must be something unexpected that alters the position, even though it might lose, like Fischer's 42...♖xd4+! vs Browne.

29...f5!! *(D)*

W



It is hard to believe this can save the game, because Black opens up the kingside. It might even remind one of the charge of the Light Brigade, and yet no other rational defence could have helped Black.

At least now Black wins material in the main line and 'forces' his opponent to show the validity of the sacrifice in a position with many alternatives and with the possibility of choosing the wrong path, and in time-trouble.

This defensive resource reminds us in part of Petrosian's two successful defences against Kasparov (from Moscow and Tilburg 1981),

in particular of 30...b5! and 35...♔c6!! of the Tilburg game.

30 exf5

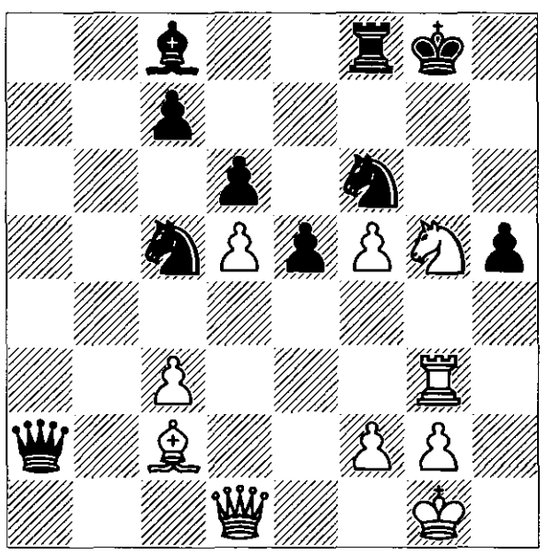
The most logical, opening lines. Also worth considering was 30 ♖h4 but abandoning the g-file was a difficult decision to make.

30...gxh5 31 ♖g3

There is nothing more than a draw after 31 ♘e6+? hxg4 32 ♕xg4+ ♔f7, and now for instance 33 f6 when Black must find the only move 33...♕a1+!!, diverting the c2-bishop from g6 (not 33...♖g8? 34 ♕h5+ ♔xf6 35 ♕f5+ ♔e7 36 ♕h7+ ♔f6 37 ♕xg8, when Black has to give up the queen to avoid mate). After 34 ♗d1 (if 34 ♔h2, there follows 34...♖h8+) 34...♘xe6 35 ♕xe6+ ♔g6 White has to give perpetual check.

31...♘f6 *(D)*

At last a defender appears on the scene. It didn't look good to play 31...h4?! 32 ♖g4! (not 32 ♕h5? ♕a1+! 33 ♗d1 ♕xd1+ 34 ♕xd1 hxg3 35 ♕h5 gxf2+, and Black defends, already having enough material for the queen) 32...♘f6 33 ♘e4+! ♔f7 (or 33...♘xg4 34 ♕xg4+ ♔f7 35 ♕g6+ ♔e7 36 f6+ ♔d8 37 ♕g7 ♖e8 38 f7) 34 ♘xf6 ♔xf6 35 ♕d2, with a winning attack.



Again White has several seemingly strong moves, but only one is winning – do you see it?

32 ♘e6+?

Tempting – White's pieces infiltrate and it is amazing he doesn't win. 32 ♘e4+! is correct, as it removes the vital defender, the f6-knight. After 32...♘g4 White wins in a similar fashion to what we have already seen: 33 ♖xg4+! hxg4 34 ♕xg4+ ♔f7 35 ♕g6+ ♔e7 36 f6+ (Kasparov indicated 36 ♕g7+, which also wins) 36...♔d8 37 ♕g7 ♖e8 38 f7 ♘xe4 39 fxe8♕+ ♔xe8 40 ♗xe4, and the black king cannot be defended. If 32...♔f7 33 ♘xf6 ♔xf6 34 ♕xh5 e4, the quickest is 35 f4!, with a decisive attack.

32...♔f7 33 ♖g7+

Black resists. He brings his pieces to the defence also in the event of 33 ♖g6, as Kasparov showed: 33...♖g8 34 ♘g5+ ♔e7 35 ♖xg8 ♘xg8 36 ♕xh5 ♕xd5 37 ♕h7+ ♔e8 38 f6 ♘xf6 39 ♕g7 ♗b7 40 ♗g6+ ♔d8 41 ♕xf6+ ♔d7.

33...♔e8 34 ♘xc7+ ♔d8 35 ♘e6+ ♔e8!

Obviously Black avoids capturing on e6, which would only create a dangerous passed pawn and a new attacker.

36 ♘c7+

After 36 ♘xc5 dxc5 37 d6 ♕d5 38 ♗d3 ♖f7 39 ♖g8+ ♖f8 40 ♗b5+ ♔f7 41 ♕a4 ♔xg8 42 ♗c4 ♕f7 43 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 44 ♕a8 ♖f8 (Kasparov) White manages to capture the black queen but doesn't win.

36...♔d8 37 ♘e6+ ♔e8 38 ♘c7+ ½-½

The possibility of Black's break ...d5 was present both in the supplementary game and in the main one. If carried out in good circumstances, Black would free his game.

In the main game, by closing the position with 18 d5 White ruled out this possibility. After the retreat 18...♘cb8! he put his hopes on the kingside attack, starting with 19 h4, but Black hadn't made any mistakes and regrouped appropriately with 19...♘c5 and 20...♗c8. Black then shifted to the counterattack with 23...♕a2!, which should have secured him a balanced game.

Nevertheless with so many attacking pieces and so few black defenders, almost perfect play was required to survive. A single error, 24...g6? instead of 24...♗xh4!, was enough for the balance to be tipped in White's favour.

Tactics hardly ever help the defender, but in lost positions the great champions find practical resources, like the seemingly suicidal 29...f5!!. The chances of success probably weren't too high but in this case it worked for Black. White made a single error too, with the alluring 32 ♘e6+? instead of 32 ♘e4+!, and Black achieved his goal of saving the game.

Exercises for Chapters 6 and 7

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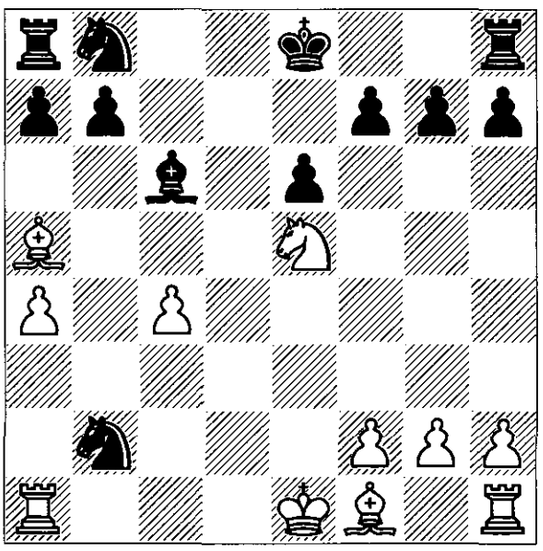

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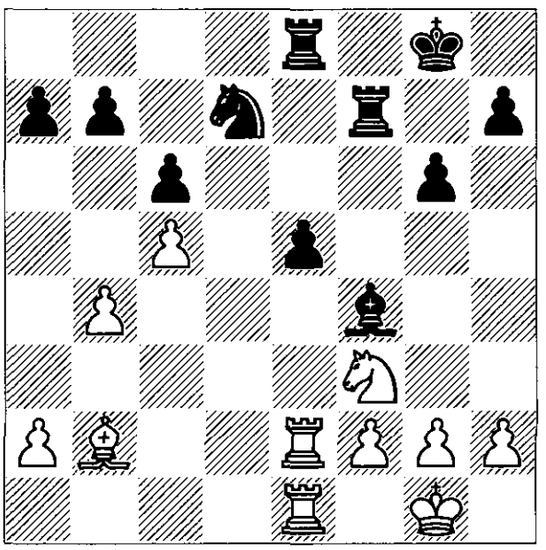

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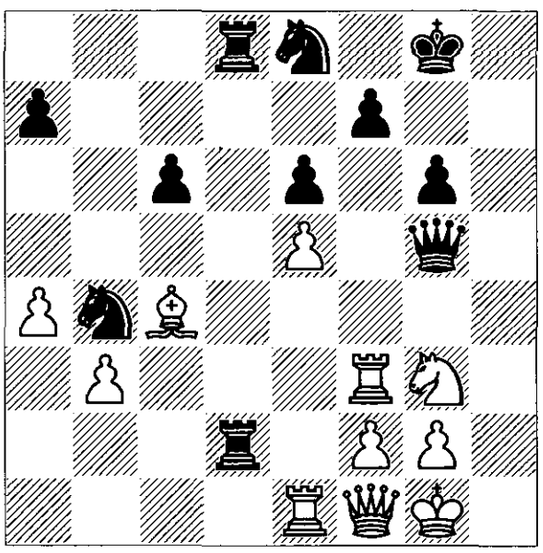

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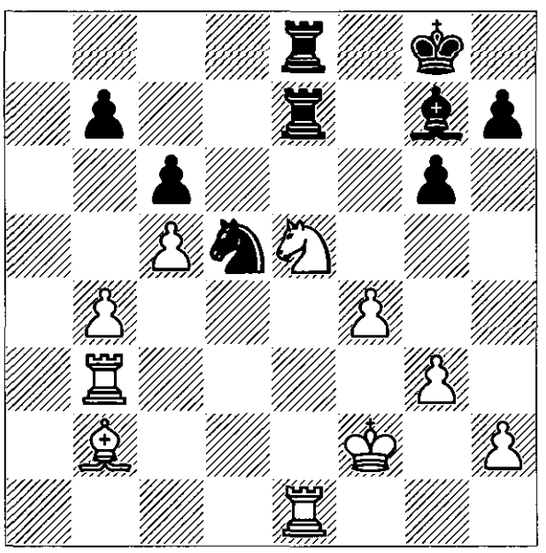

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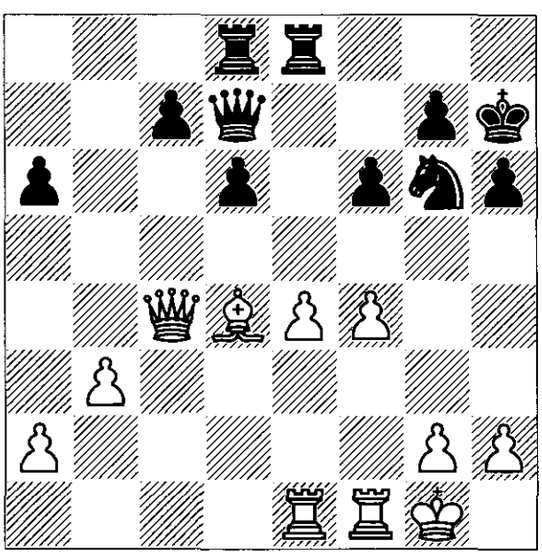

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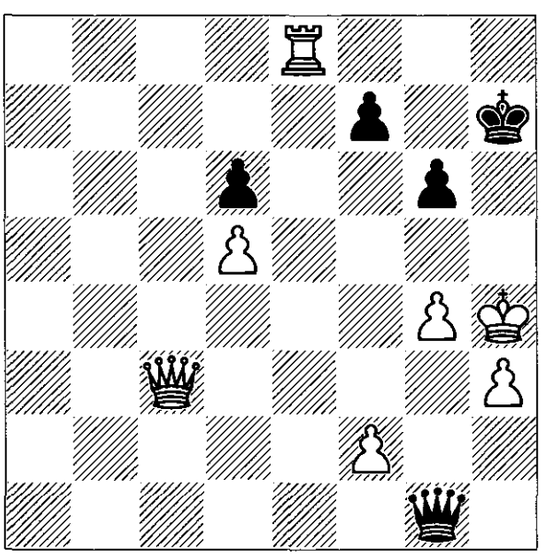

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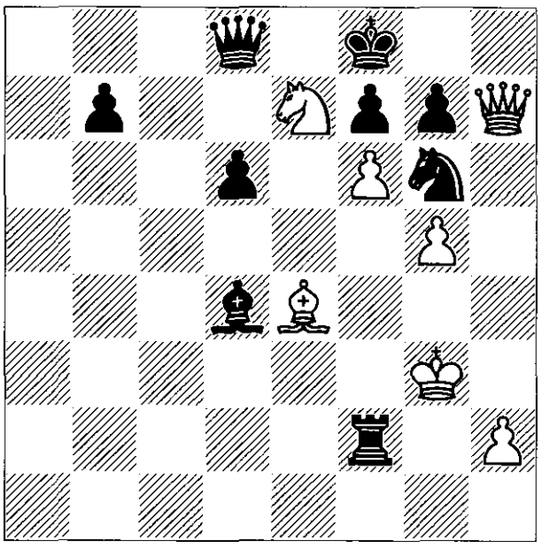

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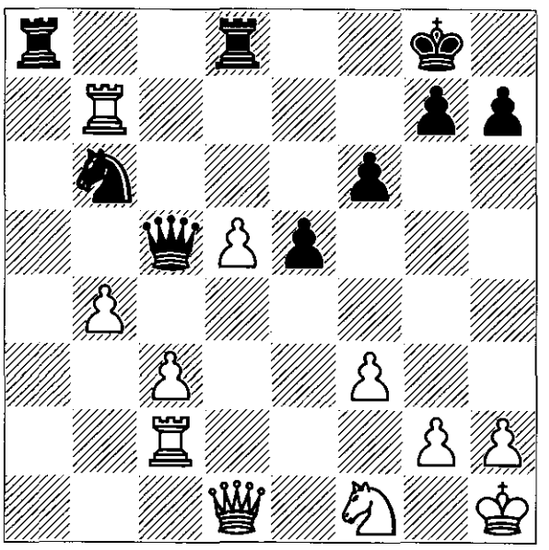

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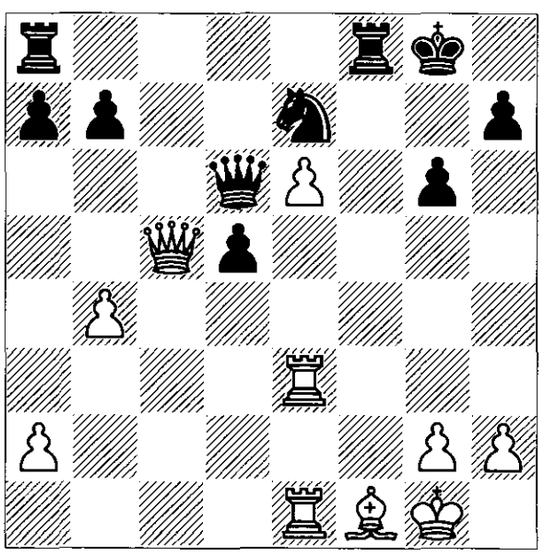

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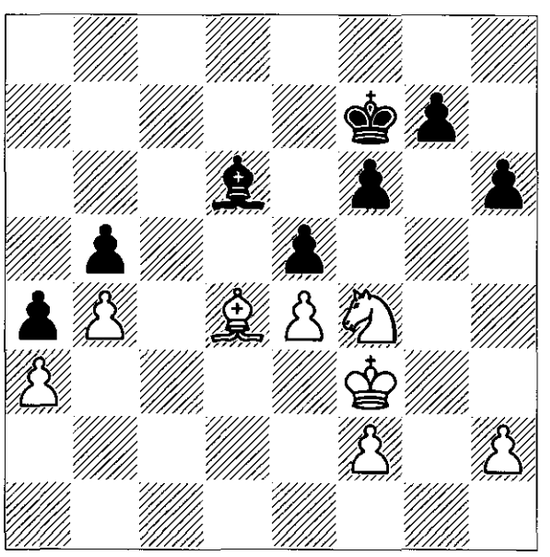

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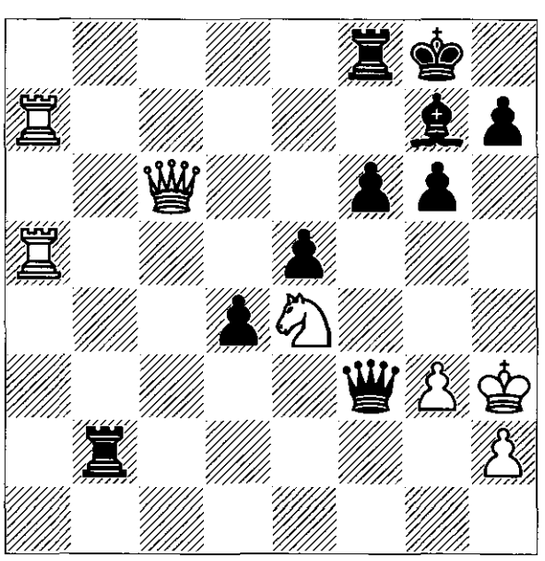

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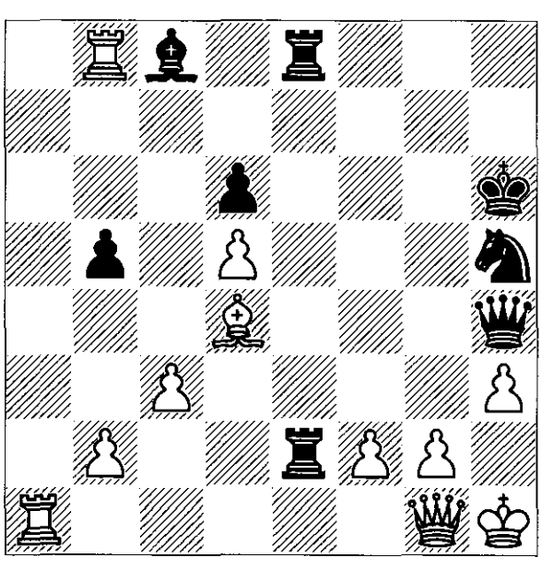

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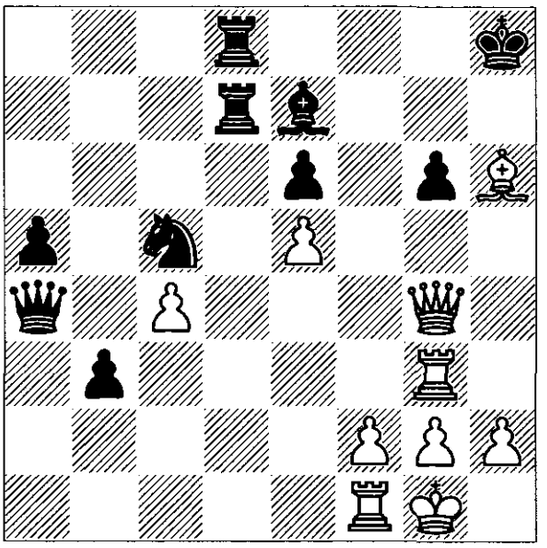


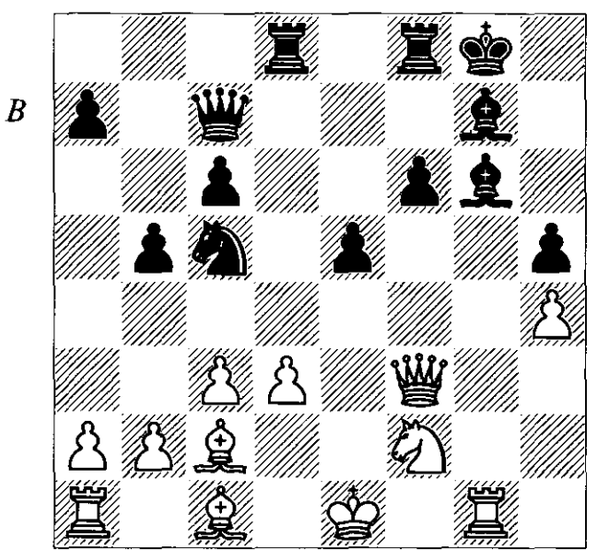
Solutions to the Exercises

Solutions for Chapters 1 to 3

Exercise 1

Steinitz – Em. Lasker

World Ch match (game 2), New York 1894



White has created an open file against the black king and now threatens the g6-bishop. In normal conditions this would be very advantageous.

On the other hand, White is a pawn down, which doesn't matter for the time being, but the fact that he lags behind in development and has his king in the centre does. Black must find the best way for these factors to bear some influence on the fight to avoid succumbing to the attack.

25...e4?

This is not the right way to exploit the situation of the white king and will soon lead to material losses. Other moves:

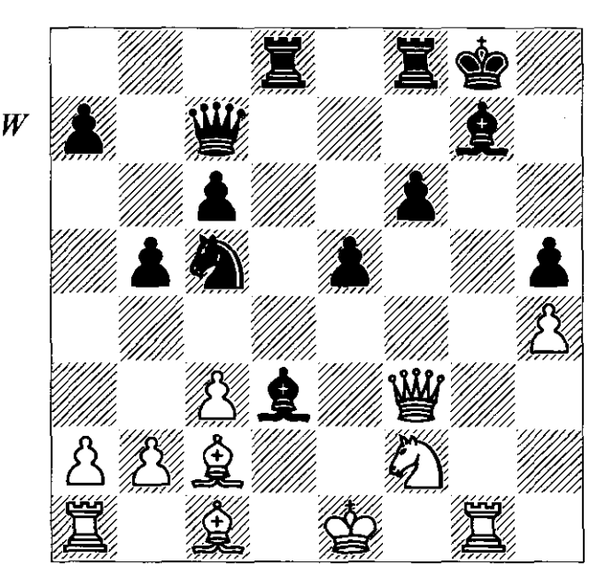
a) The passive 25...♔h7? doesn't work either due to 26 ♖xg6, followed by 27 d4+, winning.

b) The defence 25...♕f7?! is also insufficient:

b1) Keeping the pressure on the g-file is not so clear because after 26 ♕g3 ♔h7 (not 26...♗h7? 27 ♗h6 ♖d7 {27...♘e6 28 ♗b3} 28 ♗xg7 ♕xg7 29 ♕h2 ♗g6 30 d4, winning) 27 ♕xg6+ ♕xg6 28 ♖xg6 ♔xg6 29 d4+ f5 30 dxc5 ♗f6 31 a4 Black will soon have three passed pawns.

b2) It is possible to get a material advantage with 26 ♕xc6 ♖c8 (not 26...♘xd3+? 27 ♘xd3 ♗xd3 28 ♗xd3 ♖xd3 29 ♗h6, winning) and only now 27 ♕g2 (27 ♕xb5!?) 27...♔h7, when 28 ♕xg6+ ♕xg6 29 ♖xg6 ♔xg6 30 d4+ f5 31 dxc5 ♖xc5 32 ♔e2 reaches an endgame in better circumstances than after 26 ♕g3 and 27 ♕xg6+. If this ending is not convincing, it is possible to continue the middlegame with 28 ♗e3!? f5 (weakening g5, but it is not easy to defend against 29 ♗xc5 and 30 ♕xg6+; if 28...♗f5?!, then 29 ♕f3 ♗g6 30 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 31 d4) 29 ♘h3 ♗f6 30 0-0-0 and having brought all his pieces into play, White has better chances to attack.

c) The strongest move, and enough to equalize the game, is 25...♗xd3! *(D)*, recommended by Chigorin. Then:



c1) White gets nowhere with 26 ♗h6 e4 (or 26...♖f7 27 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 28 0-0-0 ♗xc2, and White doesn't manage to get anything out of

the exposed position of the black king) 27 ♕g2 ♖f7.

c2) 26 ♗xd3 ♖xd3! 27 ♘xd3 e4 28 ♕xh5 ♘xd3+, and White doesn't have better prospects, although admittedly he can force a draw with 29 ♔f1 (not 29 ♔e2? ♕h2+, nor 29 ♔d1? ♖d8) 29...♖f7 and now:

c21) 30 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 (30...♔xg7 31 ♕h6+ ♔g8 32 ♕g6+ ♔h8 {Black can fight on with 32...♔f8 33 ♗h6+ ♔e8 34 ♕xe4+ ♘e5 but this is riskier} 33 ♕h6+ and draws) 31 ♕e8+ ♔h7 32 ♕h5+ is the aforementioned draw.

c22) 30 ♗e3 ♕h2 and Black's active play together with the unsafe white king guarantees him a balanced game in return for the exchange.

26 dxe4 ♔h7?!

Losing in a simple way but 26...♕f7 27 ♗e3 ♘e6 28 ♗b3 ♖fe8 29 ♘h3, when Black's position crumbles, wasn't enough either.

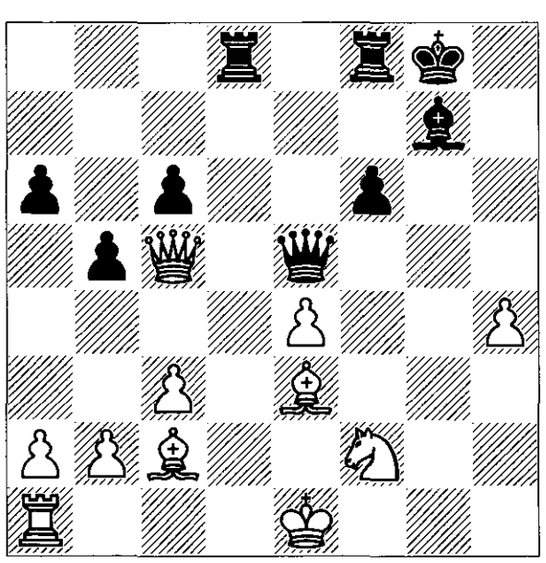
27 ♖xg6! ♔xg6 28 ♕f5+ ♔f7 29 ♕xh5+ ♔g8 30 ♕xc5

White has a decisive material advantage as well as threats against the black king.

30...♕e5 31 ♗e3

Of course White is not opposed to the exchange of queens, leading to a winning endgame.

31...a6 *(D)*



32 a4!

White doesn't deviate from his main objective. Black had offered more material, and although 32 ♕xc6 is good it is not in White's interest to complicate the game.

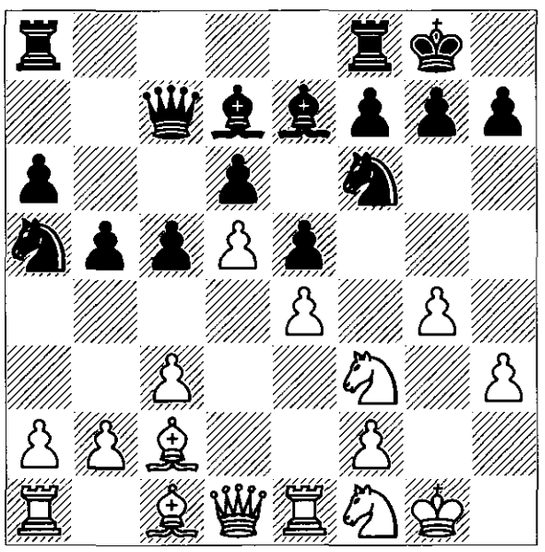
Once White's only inactive piece, the a1-rook, finds the most economical way to come into play, the rest will be simple.

32...♖fe8 33 axb5 axb5 34 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 35 ♖a6 ♖c8 36 ♘g4 ♖e7 37 ♗c5 ♖ee8 38 ♘e3 ♗f8 39 ♗d4 ♔f7 40 h5 ♗e7 41 ♗b3+ ♔f8 42 ♘f5 1-0

Exercise 2

Stoltz – Alekhine

Munich 1942



White has just played 15 g4, with the typical idea of continuing with ♘g3, then clearing the g-file, and the jump ♘f5 will become something Black needs to worry about.

Where must Black seek counterplay?

15...h5!

On the very same kingside, exploiting the fact that the h3-pawn is not defended. A similar example of well-timed counterattack can be seen in Tal-Petrosian, USSR Ch, Erevan 1975, with the difference that there the d7-bishop was on c8, and the a5-knight on c4. Very different is the case of Capablanca-Marshall, Match (game 6), Morristown 1909, in which the opening of the h-file decidedly favoured White.

16 ♘3h2 ♕c8 17 g5

This is a small victory for Black. White abandons any plans to place a strong knight on f5 but the text-move is best. It was not pleasant to keep the pawn on g4 with 17 f3 because there could follow 17...hxg4 18 hxg4 ♘h7 19 ♘g3 g6 20 ♗h6 ♖e8, and the dark squares around the white king are very weak.

17...♘h7 18 h4?!

Better was 18 ♕xh5! ♗xh3 with a complex game – it is not clear who comes out on top after the disappearance of the h-pawns.

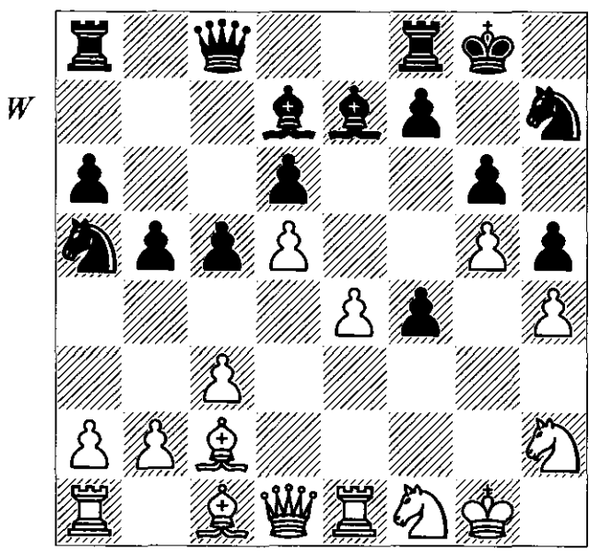
18...g6

Black now has a straightforward plan – to open the game by 19...f6, which prompts White to complicate the struggle through a risky attacking manoeuvre.

19 f4

This is dangerous for Black but perhaps even riskier for White: if the attack is parried, White won't be able to hold his exposed kingside.

19...exf4 *(D)*



20 e5

If 20 ♗xf4, there can follow 20...f6, while Kotov recommended 20...♘c4 in order to go to e5.

20...♗f5

Also worth considering was 20...dxe5 21 d6 ♗xg5 22 hxg5 ♘xg5, but this sacrifice will still be possible, so Black prefers to put his pieces to work first.

21 e6?!

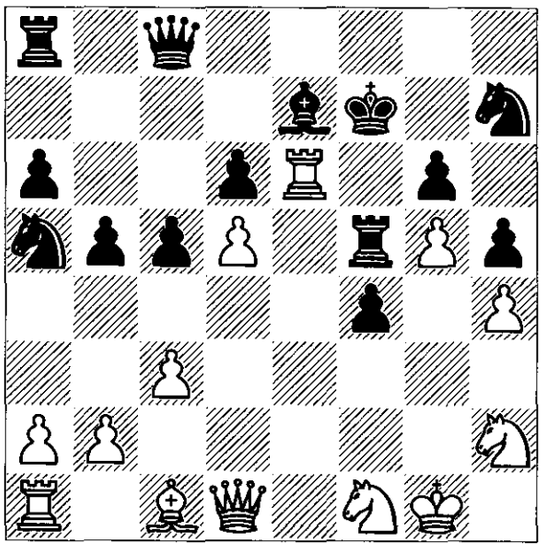
Since the attack will be refuted, it is obvious to suggest 21 ♗xf4, although Black is doing well after 21...♘c4.

21...fxe6 22 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 23 ♖xe6 ♔f7 *(D)*

The counterblow ...♗xg5 is another move White must take into account.

24 ♘g4?!

White decides to add more fuel to the fire because a quiet course would allow Black to regroup with ...♕d7, bring the a8-rook into play,

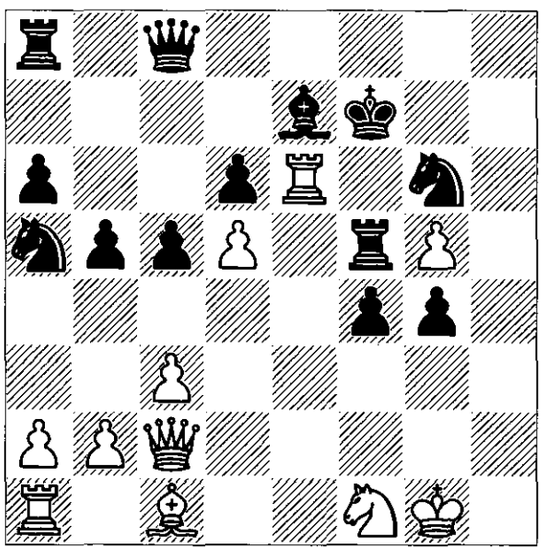


and drive the e6-rook away by ...♘f8, centralizing the remote a5-knight with ...♘c4-e5. And let's not forget that Black has an extra pawn.

24...hxg4 25 h5 ♘f8

Also possible was 25...♘xg5 26 hxg6+ ♔f8! 27 ♕xg4 ♖xd5 28 ♕xf4+ ♔g8, as Alekhine indicated.

26 hxg6+ ♘xg6 27 ♕c2 *(D)*



How should Black switch to counterattack?

27...♘h4! 28 ♗xf4 ♕h8!

Now all the black pieces, with the exception of the a5-knight, will attack the white king.

29 ♕e4

If 29 ♖h6, there would follow 29...♖xf4! 30 ♖h7+ ♕g7! 31 ♘g3 ♖h8 32 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 with a mating attack and a decisive material advantage, as Kotov points out.

29...♗xg5

"Showing that White's threats are not dangerous. Apart from a check without consequences,

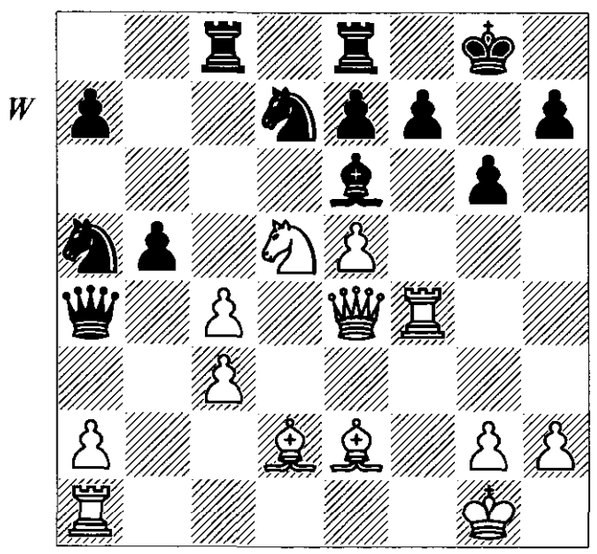
White is not in a position to annoy the enemy." (Kotov).

30 ♗xg5 ♘f3+ 31 ♔f2 ♖xg5 32 ♖e7+ ♔f8 33 ♕e6 ♕h4+ 34 ♔g2 ♕h3+ 35 ♔f2 g3+ 36 ♔xf3 ♖f5+ 37 ♔e2 ♖e5+ 0-1

Exercise 3

Quinteros – Fischer

Buenos Aires 1970



White's queenside is full of holes and if nothing special happens, in a few moves White's position will fall to pieces.

White's only reason for hope is that the black king's position is somewhat weakened. The capture ...♗xc3 has left the kingside without its best defender, so it is there where White counterattacks – but how?

23 ♖xf7!!

With this spectacular sacrifice that brought a growing murmur to the playing hall, the Teatro General San Martin in Buenos Aires. It looked as if the invincible Fischer was in serious trouble – at least no one knew what was going on.

23...♔xf7

Black couldn't defend with 23...♗xf7? 24 e6 ♘f6 25 ♘xf6+ exf6 26 exf7+ ♔xf7 27 ♕d5+ ♔g7 28 ♕d7+ ♔h8 29 ♗h6 ♖g8 30 ♕e7 (30 ♗g7+ also works) 30...♖c6 31 ♖d1.

Instead 23...♘c5!? 24 ♕h4 ♗xf7 25 ♘xe7+ ♖xe7 26 ♕xe7 is an interesting possibility, suggested by Suetin. This complicated position was deeply analysed in Soviet magazines, and also by Andrew Soltis in his book *Bobby Fischer Rediscovered*. It seems that White has compensation so the rook sacrifice is justified. One possible variation is 26...♘e6 27 ♖f1 ♖c7 28 ♕f6 (White is planning 29 ♗h6, threatening 30 ♕xe6 and also a timely ♗g4 to attack the e6-knight, a vital defender) 28...♘b7! 29 ♗h6 ♘bc5 30 cxb5, with a complex struggle ahead.

24 ♕h4 ♔g7!

It is not a good defence to play 24...♘f8? 25 ♖f1+ ♗f5 (or 25...♔g8 26 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 27 ♘xe7+ ♔g7 28 ♗h6+ ♔h8 29 ♗g5) 26 g4 ♘xc4 27 gxf5 ♘xd2 28 fxg6+ ♔e6, when after 29 c4!, there is no clear way to defend the exposed black king.

25 ♘xe7 ♕c2

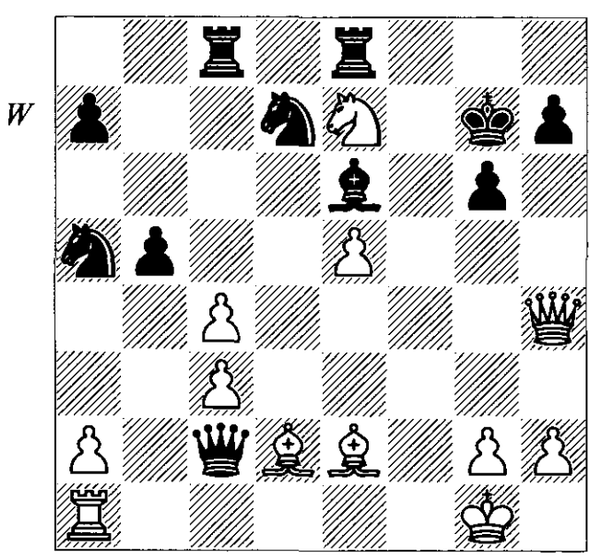
The black queen tries to influence the fight.

After 25...♖xc4 26 ♕h6+ ♔h8 27 ♘xg6+ ♔g8 28 ♗d3 Black doesn't seem to achieve any advantage:

a) If 28...♖c7?!, there follows 29 ♖f1!, with a strong attack. There are too many pieces against the black king, and the black queen is very far away; one idea is to meet 29...♘c4? by 30 ♘e7+! ♖xe7 31 ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 32 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 33 ♕e8+ ♔g7 34 ♖f7+ and mate.

b) After 28...♖d4!? White can play 29 ♘f8 ♘xf8 30 ♕g5+ which may lead to a draw, for it is not clear whether it is in Black's interest to avoid it with 30...♘g6 31 ♗xg6 ♖g4 32 ♗f7++ ♔f8 33 ♕h6+ ♔xf7 34 ♕xh7+ ♖g7 35 ♖f1+ ♔e7 36 ♕xg7+ ♔d8 37 ♕xa7. His king is still exposed and there are too many pawns for the piece.

We now return to 25...♕c2 *(D)*:



26 ♕h6+?

It was very difficult to find one's way in such a complex position. 26 ♘xc8? was no good – there would follow 26...♕xd2! 27 ♘d6 ♖f8 28 ♕e7+ ♔h8, winning.

White is still in the game after 26 ♗h6+! ♔h8 27 ♘xc8 ♕xe2 28 ♘d6 ♖g8 (not 28...g5? 29 ♗g7+! ♔xg7 30 ♕xg5+ ♔h8 31 ♘xe8, winning) 29 ♕e7 ♕xe5 30 ♕xd7 ♘xc4 31 ♘f7+ ♗xf7 32 ♕xf7 ♘d6 33 ♕xa7 ♕xc3 34 ♖f1.

In any case it is yet again confirmed that, on top of being a good practical chance, 23 ♖xf7 was a good move, the only one that allowed White to continue fighting.

26...♔h8 27 ♖c1?!

More resilient, although also insufficient, was 27 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 28 cxb5.

27...♕xc1+! 28 ♗xc1 ♖xe7

Black needs to coordinate his pieces in order to convert his material advantage.

29 cxb5 ♘c4 30 ♕h4 ♖f7 31 ♕d4 ♔g8! 32 ♗f4 ♖c5! 33 ♗f3

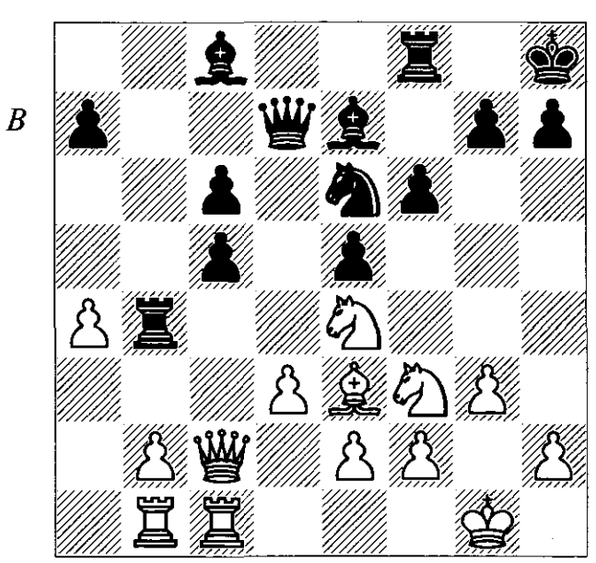
This is not a voluntary pawn sacrifice. If 33 a4, there would follow 33...♖d5! 34 ♕e4 (34 ♕xc4? ♖d1+) 34...♘c5 35 ♕f3 ♖xe5.

33...♖xb5 34 h3 ♘cxe5 35 ♗a8 ♖f8 36 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 37 ♕xa7 ♗d5 38 ♗xd5+ ♖xd5 39 ♕e3 ♖a5 40 ♕e2 ♖fa8 41 a4 ♘f7 42 h4 ♖xa4 0-1

Exercise 4

Quinteros – Portisch

Mar del Plata 1981



Again we have serious weaknesses on the queenside, as in the previous exercise, but this time with the colours reversed. The fianchettoed bishop was exchanged for the c6-knight, damaging the enemy structure.

However, here Black cannot dream of an immediate blow against the kingside – how should he obtain counterchances?

18...c4!

First the doubled pawn disappears.

19 dxc4 c5

And now, in exchange for a pawn, the passive c8-bishop becomes a strong piece with an excellent open diagonal.

20 ♖d1 ♘d4!

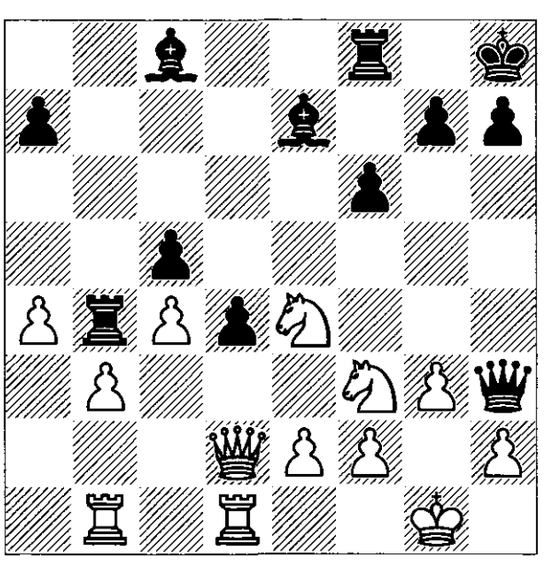
Winning back the pawn with 20...♕xa4 21 ♕xa4 ♖xa4 22 b3 would cost Black the initiative.

21 ♗xd4 exd4

As well as opening lines in Black's favour, by controlling c3 this move prevents White from having the d5-square at his knights' disposal.

22 b3 ♕h3 23 ♕d2 *(D)*

Against 23 ♕d3 Black can try to exploit a pin on the e4-knight not only by 23...♗b7 but also through 23...♗f5 with ideas of ...♕g4 and ...♖e8.



23...♗b7 24 ♕d3

The queen ends up very exposed after 24 ♕f4?, a fact that can be exploited with 24...♕e6! 25 ♘ed2 g5 (even better than the also winning 25...♗d6 26 ♕h4 ♕xe2) 26 ♕c7 ♖c8 27 ♕a5 ♗d8 28 ♕xa7 (if 28 ♘xd4, the quickest is 28...♕h3) 28...♕c6 with the threats 29...♗b6 and 29...♖a8.

24...a5!

White's extra pawn is already unnoticeable.

25 ♘ed2 ♖b6!

The rook has already carried out its duty on the queenside and now is planning to head to the centre, perhaps even the kingside.

26 ♖e1

With the idea of playing 27 e3 and a timely ♕f1.

26...♖d8 27 ♘h4

If 27 e3, Black would reply with 27...dxe3 28 ♕xe3 ♗f8, followed by ...♖bd6.

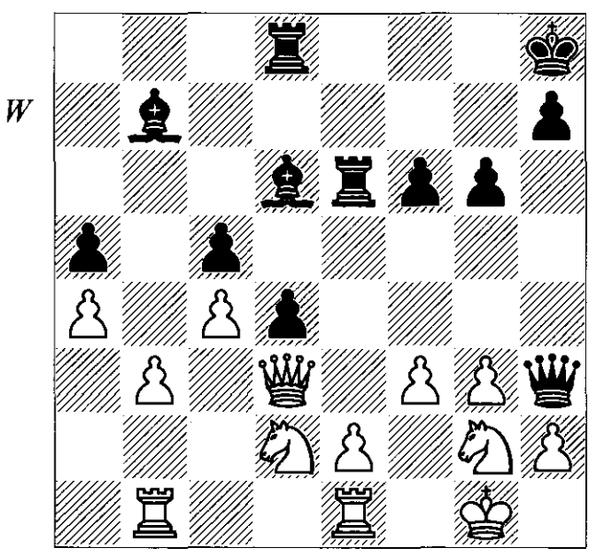
27...g6 28 f3?!

Weakening the structure like this is not done for pleasure, but the position was awkward in any case.

28...♖e6

Another good idea was 28...f5!.

29 ♘g2 ♗d6 *(D)*



30 ♘e4?!

Giving back the pawn – it doesn't completely ease off the pressure but the position after 30 e3 ♗e5 31 ♘f4 ♗xf4 32 exf4 ♖de8 isn't pleasant either, whereas 30 e4 would be met by 30...g5!, and White is paralysed.

30...♗xe4 31 fxe4 ♕g4 32 e3 ♖xe4 33 exd4 ♖xd4 34 ♕e2 ♕xe2

The middlegame was promising for Black because of White's weak king but the endgame is also good for Black. The bishop will be superior to the white knight and the centralized rooks to their white counterparts. On top of everything else White doesn't find the most resilient defence.

35 ♖xe2 ♗e5 36 ♘e3 ♖e4 37 ♔f1 ♖d3 38 ♘c2 ♖f3+! 39 ♖f2 ♖c3 40 ♖d2 h5 41 ♘e1 h4 42 ♖bd1

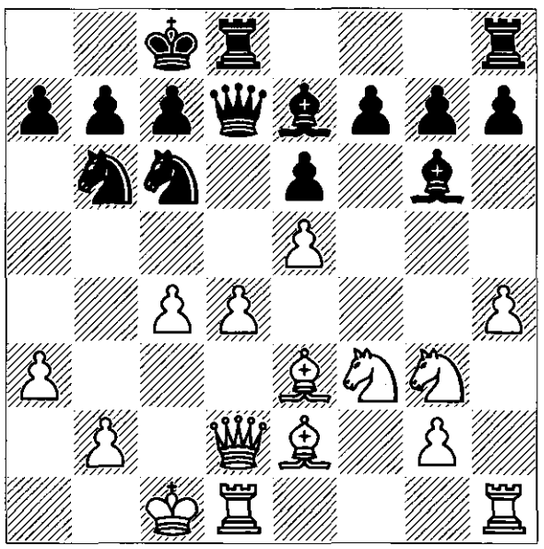
42 gxh4 ♖xh4 is also desperate – White has too many weaknesses and is very passive.

42...hxg3 43 hxg3 ♖xg3 44 ♖h2+ ♔g8 45 ♖d8+ ♔f7 46 ♘d3 ♗d4 0-1

Exercise 5

Hübner – Hort

Biel 1987



The g6-bishop is exposed – White is threatening 17 h5. It is possible to parry this threat in several ways, with 16...h5, 16...h6, or even by moving the f7-pawn, but Black doesn't need to waste a tempo and can instead counterattack on the other flank.

16...♘b4!

After the unexpected threat of mate in one move, the lack of defenders of the white king is made apparent.

17 b3

The knight is immune: 17 axb4? ♕a4 18 ♗d3 ♘xc4! wins for Black.

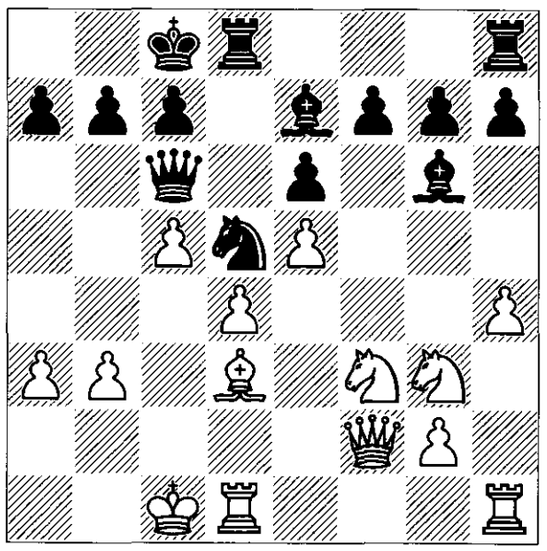
17...♘c2 18 c5 ♕c6!

By threatening ...♘xd4, Black wants more than just a well-placed piece, which he would get after 18...♘xe3 19 ♕xe3 (not 19 cxb6?? ♗xa3+) 19...♘d5.

19 ♗d3 ♘xe3 20 ♕xe3 ♘d5 21 ♕f2 *(D)*

21 ♕d2 loses to 21...♗xc5! 22 dxc5 ♕xc5+ 23 ♔b2 ♗xd3 24 ♕xd3 ♕f2+ 25 ♘e2 ♘f4.

What is the difference between this position and the similar variation after 18...♘xe3?


B

21...♗xd3 22 ♖xd3 ♕a6!

Now we can see the big difference – thanks to 18...♕c6! and the disappearance of the light-squared bishops, this tremendous fork is possible.

23 ♖hd1 ♕xa3+ 24 ♕b2 ♕xb2+ 25 ♔xb2 f5

Now good technique is needed to convert the extra pawn.

26 ♘e2 h6 27 h5 g5! 28 hxg6 ♖dg8 29 ♖h1 ♖xg6 30 g3 h5 31 ♖h3 ♖g4 32 ♘c3 ♘xc3

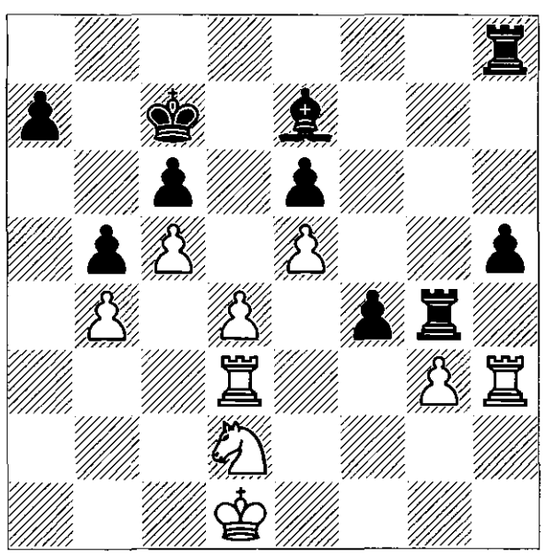
32...♘b4!?, with ideas of ...♔d7-c6, is another good possibility, as Hort points out.

33 ♔xc3 ♔d7 34 b4 c6 35 ♘d2 b5! 36 ♔c2

So that he can play ♖a3 if needed.

36...♔c7 37 ♔d1 f4 *(D)*

Another possibility indicated by Hort was 37...♗d8, with ideas of ...♔b7 and ...a5, obtaining a passed pawn on the queenside.


W

38 gxf4 ♖xf4

But this is equally strong. Not only has Black created a passed pawn but the weakness of b4 is now an accessible target for his rooks.

39 ♔e2 h4 40 ♔e3 ♖g4 41 ♘e4 ♖g1! 42 ♖a3 ♔b8 43 ♖h2 ♖f8! 44 ♖aa2 ♖b1 45 ♘f6?!

The defence isn't easy either after 45 ♖ab2 ♖ff1.

45...♗xf6 46 exf6 ♖xf6 47 ♖xh4 ♖f7!

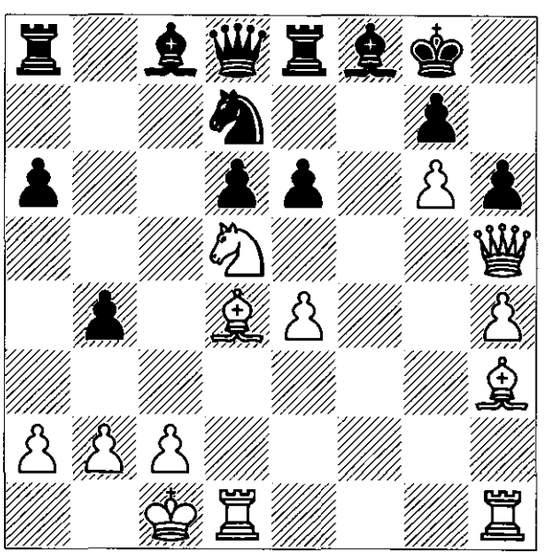
After this move, defending Black's second rank, Hort says Black has a winning endgame.

48 ♔e4 ♖d7 49 ♔e5 ♖xb4 50 ♖d2 a5 51 ♔xe6 ♔c7 52 ♔e5 ♖e7+ 53 ♔f6 ♖d7 54 ♔e5 a4 55 ♔e4 ♖c4 0-1

Exercise 6

Sax – Polugaevsky

Haninge 1989


B

The d5-knight is an annoying guest. For the time being it is untouchable because the a8-rook falls. Which defence is better, 18...♗b7 or 18...♖b8?

18...♖b8!

The rook can come into play via b5 and the text-move is a much more useful move than the routine development of the bishop, which is already playing an important role on c8, as we shall see. Indeed, 18...♗b7? is refuted by 19 ♕f3! (threatening 20 ♗xe6+) 19...exd5 20 ♕f7+ ♔h8 21 ♗xd7 ♖e7 22 ♕f4! (threatening 23 ♕xh6+ and mate) 22...♔g8 23 ♗e6+, winning.

19 ♖hf1

After the retreat 19 ♘e3? there follows 19...e5 20 ♗a7 ♖b7.

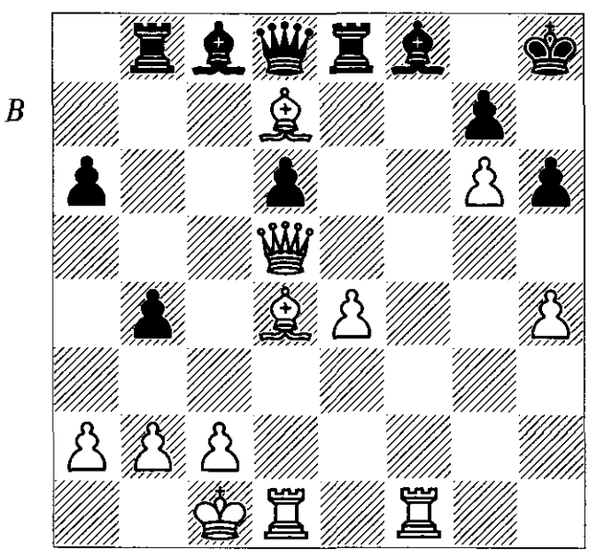
19 ♘f4 is also insufficient: 19...e5! 20 ♘e6 ♘f6! 21 ♘xd8 ♘xh5 22 ♘c6 ♗xh3 23 ♘xb8 ♖xb8 24 ♖xh3 ♘f4 25 ♗a7 ♖b7 with a decisive material advantage.

Of course the d7-knight is now protected and thus 19 ♕f3 is not possible.

19...exd5 20 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 21 ♖f7?

21 ♕h5 doesn't work either – Black repels the attack and ends up ahead in material by 21...♘f6! (if 21...♘e5?, then 22 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 23 ♗xe5, when White has compensation for the exchange) 22 ♗xf6 (insufficient is 22 ♖xf6 gxf6, with the idea of playing ...♗g7, and with ...♖b5 as an 'emergency button') 22...gxf6, and there isn't enough compensation.

21 ♗xd7! *(D)* is correct, and gives Black some problems.



What now? How should Black retake?

a) Not 21...♗xd7? 22 ♖f7 ♖e6 (against 22...♖b5, 23 ♖xg7! wins, whereas if 22...♗e6, there follows 23 ♕h5 ♔g8 24 ♕xh6!! gxh6 25 ♖h7 and mate) 23 ♕h5 ♔g8 24 ♖df1, and there is no good defence against 25 ♗xg7; if 24...♖e8 White mates after 25 ♖xf8+! ♖xf8 26 ♕d5+ ♔h8 27 ♗xg7+! ♔xg7 28 ♖f7+ ♔xg6 29 h5#.

b) 21...♕xd7! 22 ♖f7 ♕e6 23 ♕c6 ♖d8, with enough compensation for the piece.

21...♘e5!

And not the overconfident 21...♖b5? because of 22 ♖xg7! and White mates quickly.

22 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 23 ♕xe5 ♗xh3

Black has a material plus but it is still not simple to convert it because the black king requires care.

24 ♕d5 ♕e8!

Seeking relief in the exchange of queens.

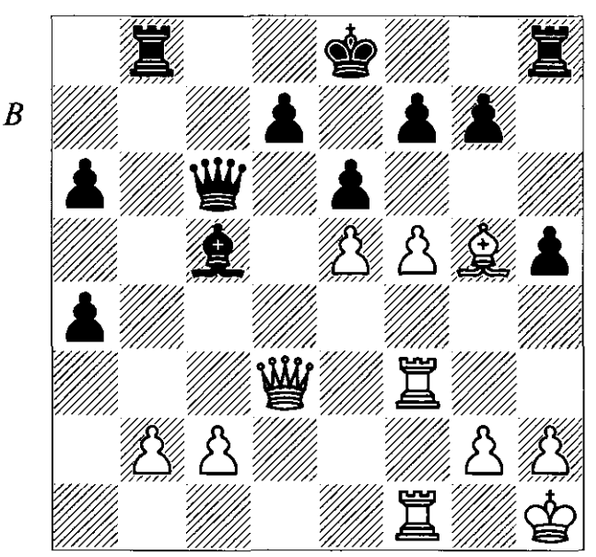
25 ♖d2 ♕e6 26 ♖df2 ♕xd5 27 exd5 ♔g8 28 ♖a7 ♗g4 29 ♔d2 ♗h5 30 ♖g2 ♖b5 31 ♖xa6 ♖xd5+ 32 ♔e3 ♖e5+ 33 ♔d4 ♖f5 34 ♖b6 d5 35 ♖b8 ♖f6 36 a4 bxa3 37 bxa3 ♗xg6 38 a4 ♖a6 39 a5 ♗f7 40 ♖b5 ♗e7 41 ♖e2 ♗xh4 42 ♔c5

Now Black played 42...♗f6? and eventually won, but in so doing he missed a shorter win by 42...♔h7!, avoiding 43 ♖b8+ followed by 44 ♔b5, because 43 ♖b7 doesn't work due to 43...♗h5 44 ♖h2 ♖xa5+! 45 ♔b4 ♗e1+ 46 c3 ♖a1!, and thanks to the check on b1 Black defends the h5-bishop and wins easily.

Exercise 7

Kasparov – Kengis

Tal Memorial, Riga 1995

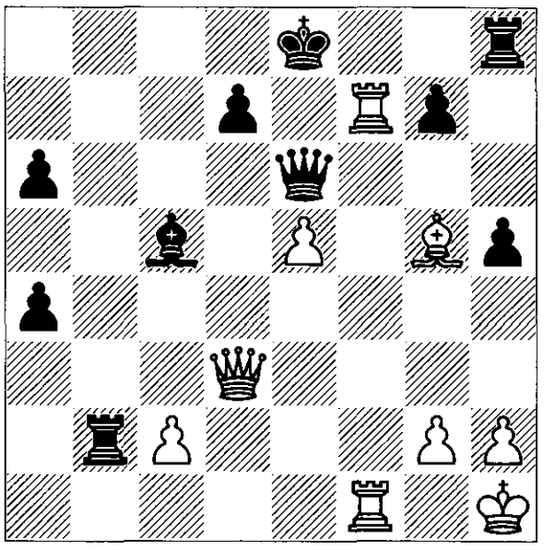


How should one assess this position? Black has an extra pawn, but it is useless for the time being; White is ahead in development; the black king is still in the centre so the h8-rook is not playing yet. This description can lead us to take the same wrong decision that Black took.

19...0-0?

Putting the king into safety ... or does it?

The seemingly paradoxical 19...♖xb2!! was best. This is both a counterattacking move, because the doubled a4-pawn isn't so useless any more, and a defensive one, because it allows Black to get rid of an attacker. After 20 fxe6 ♕xe6 21 ♖xf7 *(D)* (if 21 ♕c3, then 21...♖b5 holds) there are several possibilities:



a) 21...♖f8? doesn't work due to 22 ♕f3!, threatening both 23 ♖xf8+ and the mortal check on a8, winning.

b) Capturing the rook with 21...♕xf7 seems to be enough to draw after some very complex lines; e.g., 22 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 23 h4 a3 24 ♕xd7+ ♔g6! (worse is 24...♔g8? 25 ♗f6! gxf6 26 exf6 ♖h7 27 ♕e8+ ♗f8 28 ♕g6+ ♗g7 29 f7+ ♔h8 30 ♕d6! and a quick mate) 25 ♕d3+ ♔f7 26 ♕c4+ ♔g6 27 e6!? (after 27 ♕xc5 a2 White must force the draw) 27...♖f8!! 28 ♕xc5 a2 29 ♕xf8 a1♕+ 30 ♔h2 ♖b1, and the game appears balanced; for instance, 31 ♕f7+ ♔h7 32 ♕xh5+ ♔g8 33 ♕f7+ ♔h7 34 ♕f5+ (34 e7 ♕e5+ 35 ♗f4 ♖h1+! 36 ♔xh1 {or 36 ♔g3 ♕e1+} 36...♕e1+ 37 ♔h2 ♕xh4+ and draws) 34...♔g8 35 e7 ♖h1+ 36 ♔g3 ♕e1+.

c) Another possibility is the counterblow 21...♖b1! 22 ♖xb1 (if 22 ♕e4, there follows 22...♕c6) 22...♔xf7 23 ♖f1+ ♔g8! (but not 23...♔e8? 24 ♕f3!, when again there is no good reply to the threat of 25 ♕a8#) and with the disappearance of one rook Black defends his king satisfactorily.

20 ♗f6!

Answering the question posed after 19...0-0: no, in this case castling doesn't bring safety. Having played ...h5, the black king will no longer be safe on the kingside.

20...♕b5

20...♖b4 is insufficient: 21 ♖g3 (even stronger than 21 ♗xg7) 21...♖g4 22 h3 wins.

21 ♖g3! g6

21...♕xd3 leads to mate after 22 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 23 ♖g5+ ♔h7 24 ♖xh5+ ♔g8 25 ♖h8#.

22 ♕d1! exf5 23 ♖xf5 ♖b6 24 ♕xh5 1-0

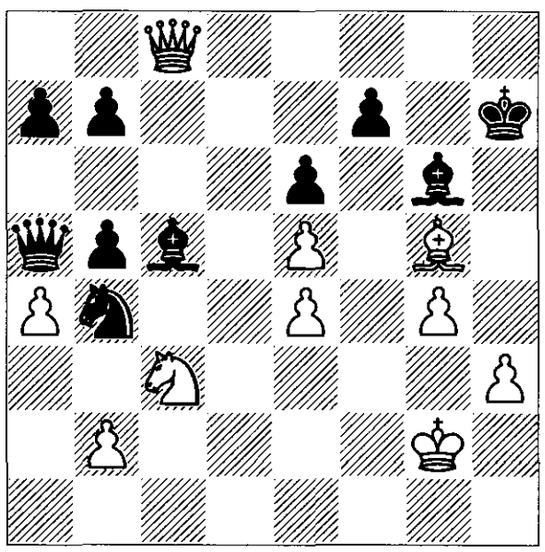
White mates in a few moves. What conclusion can we extract? It is clear that in sharp positions, general rules are of limited value while good tactical analysis is paramount.

It is notable that Black shouldn't 'defend' by castling but rather by counterattacking with 19...♖xb2, which would have obtained a passed pawn on a4, and at the same time allowed the saving simplification with ...♖b1. Both circumstances were needed for Black to be able to compensate for White's dynamic superiority in the original position.

Exercise 8

Kramnik – Ivanchuk

Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 1996



White has sacrificed a piece but, besides the c5-bishop, he threatens 29 ♗f6 with a quick mate.

28...♘d5!!

Stopping 29 ♗f6, and giving the black queen more room.

29 ♕xc5

If 29 exd5, the black queen comes to the defence with 29...♕b4!, hitting b2, and 30 ♗f6? doesn't work because Black mates first by 30...♕xb2+ 31 ♔h1 ♕c1+ 32 ♔g2 ♕g1+ 33 ♔f3 ♕f2#.

29...♘xc3 30 ♕xc3 ♕xa4 31 ♔g3 ♕xe4

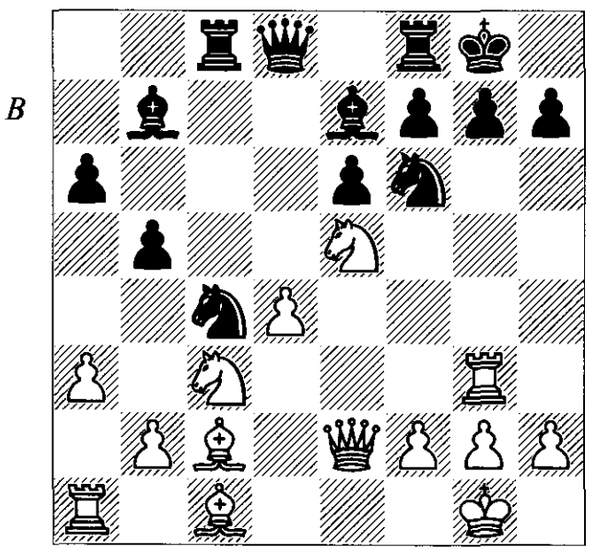
The black king is still in a mating-net but Black has managed to activate his queen and leave the white king exposed, allowing him to save the game.

32 ♗f6 b4 33 ♕c8 ♕e1+ 34 ♔f4 ♕f2+ 35 ♔g5 ♕d2+ 36 ♔h4 ♕h6+ 37 ♔g3 ♕e3+ ½-½

Exercise 9

Illescas – Anand

Match (game 2), Leon 1997



White's attacking position against the black king looks threatening: he has already managed to transfer his rook to g3 but not all his pieces are in play, whereas the black pieces are. If the a1-rook were on d1, White's position would be clearly advantageous, but...

How should Black parry the threat of 17 ♗h6?

16...♕xd4!

With this bold capture, which doesn't neglect the defence. Instead, the passive 16...♔h8? yields the initiative to White. There would follow 17 ♗g5, threatening 18 ♗xf6 and 19 ♕h5.

17 ♗h6?

The tactical duel will be unfavourable, although after 17 ♘xc4 ♕xc4 18 ♗d3 ♕c7 19 ♗h6 ♘e8 White doesn't have enough compensation for the pawn.

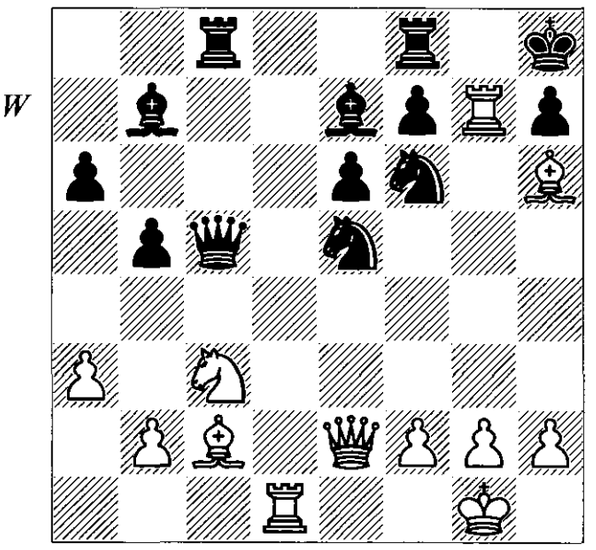
17...♘xe5! 18 ♖xg7+

If 18 ♖d1, Black defends by 18...♕c5 19 ♗xg7 ♘g6, with a decisive material advantage.

18...♔h8 19 ♖d1

One of the keys of the defence is that if White plays 19 ♖g5, Black wins by 19...♖g8!, when it is he who puts the open g-file to good use, not White.

19...♕c5 *(D)*



20 ♖d5

White tries to muddy the waters, but won't succeed. Again if 20 ♖g5, the winning line is 20...♖g8! (taking aim at the vulnerable g2-square) 21 ♖xe5 (or 21 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♖xg2+ 23 ♔f1 ♘g4) 21...♖xg2+ 22 ♔f1 ♖xh2; for example, 23 ♔e1 ♖h1+ 24 ♔d2 ♕d4+ 25 ♔c1 ♖xd1+ 26 ♘xd1 ♘g4.

20...♗xd5 21 ♕xe5

Threatening 22 ♖xh7+.

21...♗e4!

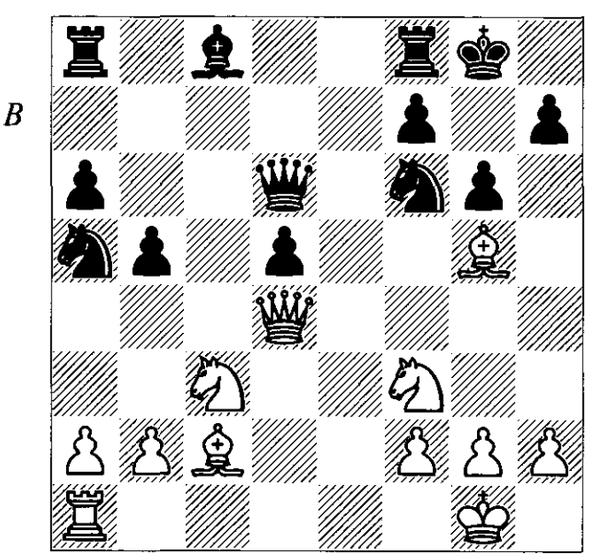
There is no other good move, but this is enough.

0-1

Exercise 10

Illescas – Anand

Match (game 6), Leon 1997



White has given up even more material, an exchange and a pawn, but in return the black

king's position has been weakened. Where should Black move the f6-knight?

17...♘h5!

"The key move – Black could have also played 17...♘e8 but the knight is much more active on h5. Its usefulness can be seen in that it prevents ♗f4, attacking the black queen." (Anand).

18 ♘xd5 ♘c6!

The only defence, but effective. Both 19 ♘e7+ and 19 ♘f6+ are met by capturing with the queen.

This was calculated by Anand several moves in advance. He pointed out that this resource of capturing with the queen is sometimes difficult to see, the more so when calculating many moves ahead, because it is 'usual' to recapture with a minor piece.

19 ♕d2 f6!

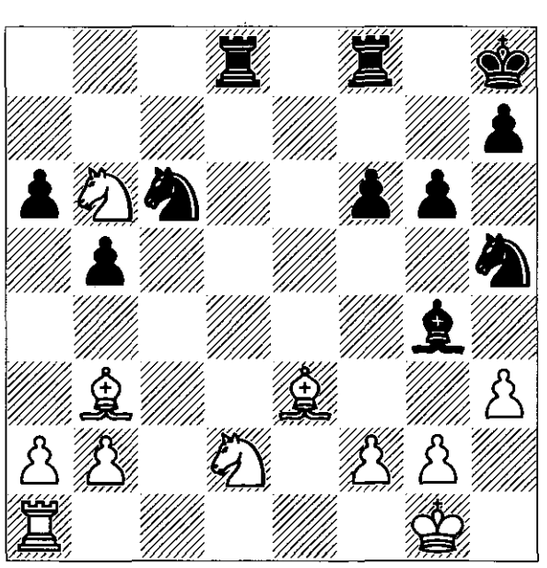
"Black will have to play this sooner or later, so why waste time with 19...♔h8?" (Anand).

20 ♗b3 ♔h8 21 ♗e3 ♗g4 22 ♘b6

Anand considered 22 ♘d4! to be better because, being down in material, White shouldn't exchange pieces. Exchanging the queens is a mistake.

Anand added that with the queens on the board White would still have some chances because Black would still have to bring the h5-knight back into play.

22...♕xd2 23 ♘xd2 ♖ad8 24 h3 *(D)*

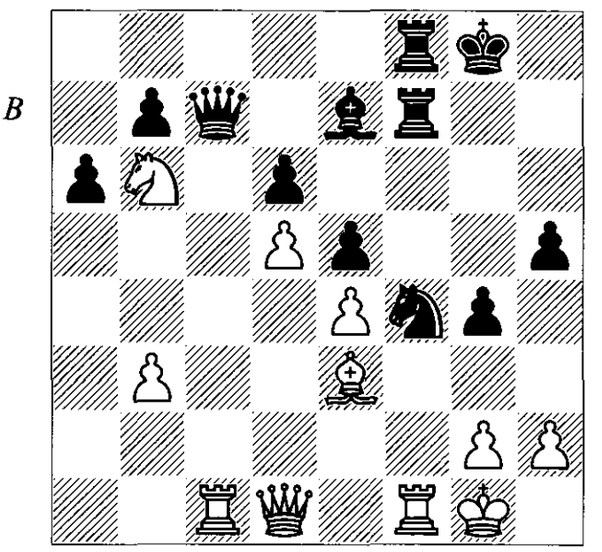


And now where should Black move the bishop? You can take this position as '**Exercise 10a**'. See page 234 for the solution.

Exercise 11

Sashikiran – Kasimdzhanov

FIDE World Cup, Hyderabad 2002



What should Black do? The queen is attacked and has only two squares at its disposal.

Of course if 31...♕d8?, there follows 32 ♖c8. It would seem there is nothing better than to bury the queen on the queenside with 31...♕b8.

Nevertheless, after deeper examination we see that the f1-rook is defended precariously. The accumulation of forces is huge – is it possible to carry out some counterattack?

The first thing that is clear is that it is wrong to win the queen temporarily with 31...♘h3+?? 32 gxh3 ♖xf1+ 33 ♕xf1 ♖xf1+ 34 ♔xf1, for there follows 35 ♖c8(+), and White wins the queen back with an extra piece and a winning position to boot.

31...♗g5!!

Kasimdzhanov was understandably proud of finding this brilliant move which exploits White's back-rank problems, helped by the defencelessness of the e3-bishop.

Now all the black pieces cooperate perfectly and the queen joins in too.

32 ♕d2

The key is that if 32 ♖xc7, Black wins with 32...♘e2+ 33 ♕xe2 ♗xe3+ and mate. 32 ♗xf4 doesn't work either because the capture on b6 is with check.

Getting off the f-file with 32 ♖e1 is not enough: there would follow 32...♘h3+ 33 gxh3 ♗xe3+ 34 ♖xe3 ♕xb6 and there is no defence.

32...♕e7!

Bringing the queen into the attack, with ideas of 33...♕f6 and 34...♕g6, is much better than entering the endgame with 32...♘h3+?! 33 gxh3 ♕xb6 34 ♗xb6 ♗xd2 35 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 36 ♖c2, when Black has just a slight advantage.

33 ♖fe1 ♕f6 34 ♖c8

"This shortens the agony. White's position was beyond salvation." (Kasimdzhanov).

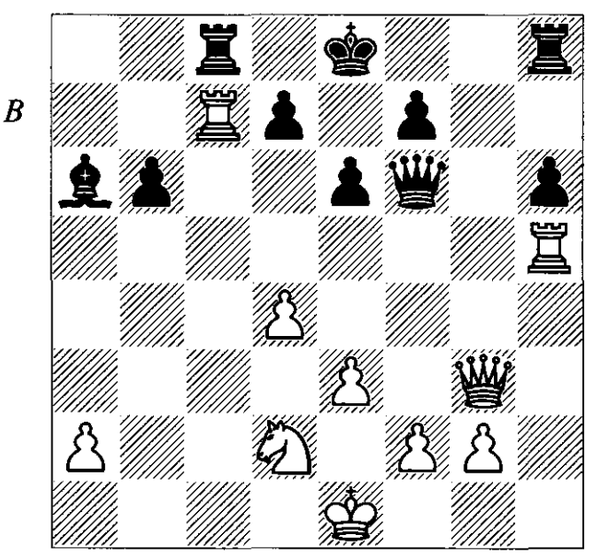
Better, although insufficient to save the game, was 34 ♔h1 ♕g6 35 ♖c4 h4.

34...♘e2+ 0-1

Exercise 12

Gelfand – Vallejo

Moscow (team event) 2004



A quick look could give the mistaken impression that the black pieces lack coordination. The h8-rook and the a6-bishop in particular don't have any bearing on the game. White has his pieces more actively placed. However, in just two moves Black clears up the situation.

21...♖xc7! 22 ♕xc7 ♕g6!

Highlighting the weaknesses in White's position. Suddenly all its defects become apparent, like the lack of safety of the white king and the unprotected back rank.

Thanks to the tactical weakness of the unprotected h5-rook, Black wins the necessary tempo to attack the now very weak white king on e1.

23 ♖h3?

The sudden change of role, from attacker to attacked, hinders White's ability to find the best defence, which was not completely satisfactory anyway.

It wasn't effective to play 23 d5 ♕d3! 24 ♕b8+ ♔e7 25 d6+!? ♕xd6 26 ♕xh8 (or 26 ♕xd6+ ♔xd6, with a superior ending for Black) 26...♕d3 27 ♔d1 ♕e2+ 28 ♔c2 ♕xh5, when Black has an extra pawn and the white king is exposed.

23 ♕xb6 ♕xh5, threatening mate, doesn't work either: 24 ♕xa6 0-0, and the exchange wins.

The most tenacious was 23 ♕e5, defending the h5-rook and attacking the h8-rook. After 23...♖f8! 24 e4 (not 24 ♘e4? f6 25 ♕b8+ ♔f7, winning, nor 24 ♖h2? ♕d3! 25 ♕h5, and now 25...♔e7! followed by ...♖c8, winning) 24...♕xg2 25 ♕g3 ♖g8 26 ♕xg2 ♖xg2 27 f3 ♖g6, Black is a pawn up.

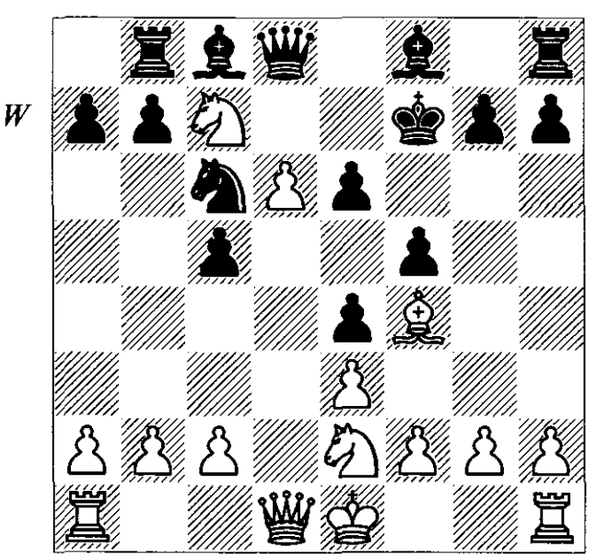
23...♕d3 24 ♔d1 ♔e7! 0-1

The h8-rook will decisively enter the game via c8.

Exercise 13

Ivanchuk – Jobava

Capablanca Memorial, Havana 2005



The game is at a critical stage. An important factor is whether White can keep the strong d6-pawn. He is not ahead in development and Black threatens to seize the initiative by 13...g5. If 13 h4, there follows 13...h5 and Black's position becomes more solid.

Another factor to take into account is the safety of the black king: if White manages to weaken it, the other elements could fade into the background.

13 g4!!

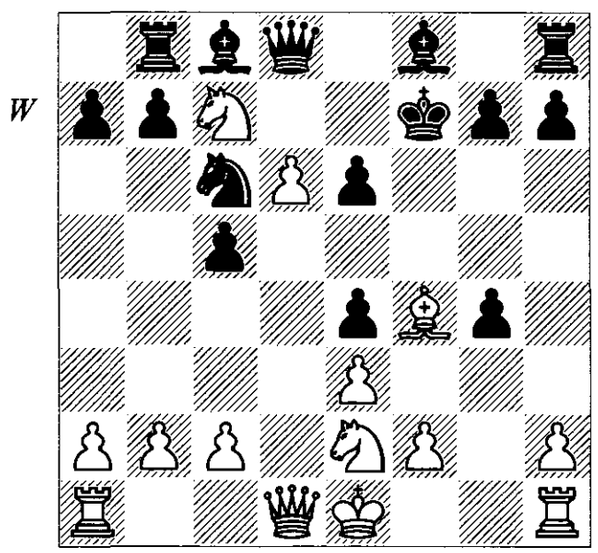
"This move breaks up Black's position. White has to act vigorously, as otherwise Black may seize the initiative" (Ivanchuk).

There is a lot of calculation behind this violent advance. Black can force the sacrifice of material but the safety of his king will decrease significantly.

13...fxg4 *(D)*

13...g5 is met by 14 gxf5! gxf4 15 ♘xf4, when the entry of the white queen into play is decisive; for example, 15...♕xd6 16 ♕h5+ ♔e7 17 f6+.

Against 13...g6 Ivanchuk considered making headway differently: 14 gxf5 gxf5 15 ♘d4!! h5 16 ♘xc6 (or perhaps 16 ♘xf5) 16...bxc6 17 ♖g1, when the safety of the black king is damaged and Black doesn't have counterplay. If 17...♖xb2, then 18 ♗e5.



14 ♘g3

After the capture of the e4-pawn, the knight will be very dangerous. Later on Ivanchuk preferred the original 14 h4!, controlling g5, with a strong initiative. After the opening of lines with 14...gxh3 there follows 15 ♘g3 and again the white queen looks frightening: 15...♔g8 16 ♘xe4 with a very strong attack ahead. 14...h5 is met by 15 ♘g3 ♔g8 16 ♘xe4, with an attack. Ivanchuk noted that the best for Black was 14...♗d7 15 ♘c3 ♕f6 16 ♕xg4 (16 ♘xe4 is interesting, meeting 16...♕f5 with 17 f3, and 16...♕xb2?! by 17 c3 or 17 0-0, with greater activity for White) 16...♕f5 17 ♕xf5+ exf5 18 0-0-0, with a slight advantage for White.

14...♘b4

Against 14...g5 White again launches a very strong attack by sacrificing a piece and allowing the queen to enter the game after 15 ♘xe4! gxf4 16 ♕xg4.

15 a3 ♘d5 16 ♘xe4 ♘xf4 17 exf4

"Now Black's position is completely hopeless: the d6-pawn together with the active knights prevent him from disentangling himself" (Ivanchuk).

17...♔g8 18 ♕xg4 h5

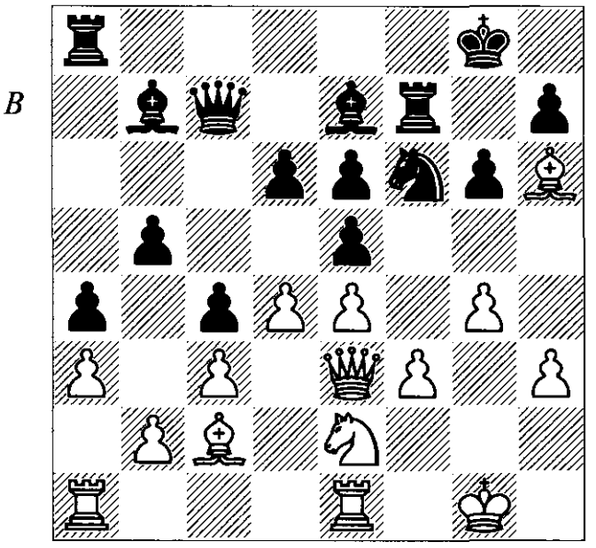
If 18...♗xd6, the elegant 19 ♘e8!, followed by 20 ♖d1, wins.

19 ♕g3 b5 20 ♖g1 ♖h6 21 0-0-0 ♔h8 22 ♘xc5 b4 23 axb4 ♖xb4 24 d7 ♖c4 25 ♘5xe6 1-0

Exercise 14

Bologan – Aronian

Stepanakert 2005



White has made progress on the kingside. One could think of 25...♔h8 to drive the h6-bishop away.

Note, though, that by pushing his kingside pawns White has also weakened his position. Nevertheless if Black doesn't hurry to exploit the somewhat hidden weaknesses of g3 and f3, White will bolster his kingside and he will be the one to dominate the game.

How can Black create favourable tension on the kingside? Tactics must justify the decision or the black king could be the one who loses out.

25...d5!

With the opening of lines, the defensive weaknesses of the white king start to be felt.

26 dxe5

26 ♖f1 doesn't bring relief because Black adds more fuel to the fire with 26...exd4 27 cxd4 e5.

26...dxe4!

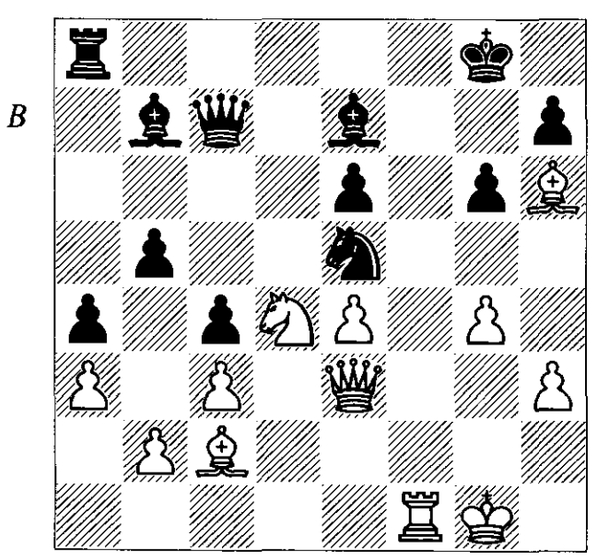
"The temporary sacrifice allows Black to expose White's king position completely." (Bologan).

27 fxe4

Of course 27 exf6? fails to 27...♗c5, when 28 ♘d4 is necessary, leaving the vital g3-square exposed. Black wins easily with 28...♕g3+ 29 ♔f1 exf3 30 ♕f2 ♕xh3+ 31 ♔g1 ♕xg4+, followed by 32...♕h3+ and ...♖xf6 or ...♗d6.

No better is 27 f4, giving Black a strong centralized knight that furthermore hits f4. Black wins by 27...♘d5 28 ♕g3 ♗f8! 29 ♗xf8 ♖axf8 30 ♗xe4 ♘xf4 31 ♘xf4 ♖xf4 32 ♗xb7 ♕xb7, with the idea of playing ...♖f3, although after 33 ♖f1 he first improves the situation of his queen by 'climbing the stairs' to attack the e5-pawn: 33...♕b6+ 34 ♔g2 ♕c6+ 35 ♔g1 ♕c5+ 36 ♔g2 ♕d5+ 37 ♔g1 and only now 37...♖f3.

27...♘d7 28 ♘d4 ♘xe5 29 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 30 ♖xf1 *(D)*



30...♘f7!

After exchanging the bishop, the weaknesses of the dark squares in the white camp will be more apparent and, furthermore, although the e5-knight was strong it was obstructing the actions of the black queen.

31 ♔g2

The counterattack 31 e5 doesn't achieve anything because after 31...♘xh6 32 ♗xg6 hxg6 33 ♕xh6 the black kingside gets a decisive reinforcement with 33...♗e4!, when 34 ♕f4 ♗d5 doesn't work. Black now defends the vital point e6 and after 35 ♕f7+ ♔h8 36 ♕xg6 ♕xe5 the black queen parries all the threats.

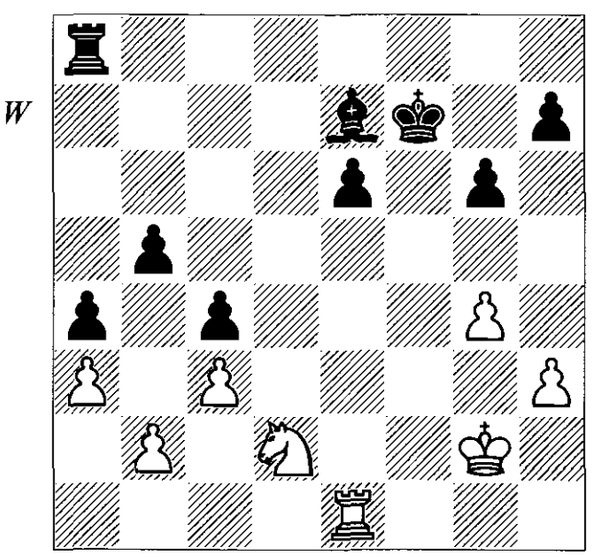
31...♘xh6 32 ♕xh6 ♕e5

This centralizing move both defends e6 and threatens 33...♗d6.

33 ♘f3 ♗xe4 34 ♗xe4?!

Bologan pointed out that his last practical chance was to enter an endgame a pawn down but with opposite-coloured bishops by 34 ♕e3 ♗xf3+ 35 ♖xf3 ♕xe3 36 ♖xe3 ♔f7. The presence of the rooks makes the defensive task very unpleasant though.

34...♕xe4 35 ♖e1 ♕c2+ 36 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 37 ♘xd2 ♔f7 *(D)*



38 ♖f1+

Bologan's original idea was 38 ♖e5 but he noticed that there weren't any saving chances either after 38...♖d8! 39 ♘f3 ♖d5 40 ♖xd5 exd5 41 ♘d4 ♗g5 42 ♘xb5 ♗c1 43 ♔f3 ♔f6 44 ♔e2 ♔g5 45 ♔d1 ♗f4, and the black king captures the two kingside pawns, or the vital b2-pawn, winning easily.

38...♔e8 39 ♔f3 ♖d8 40 ♔e2 ♖d3 41 ♖f3 ♖d5 42 ♘e4 ♖e5 43 ♖e3 ♔d7

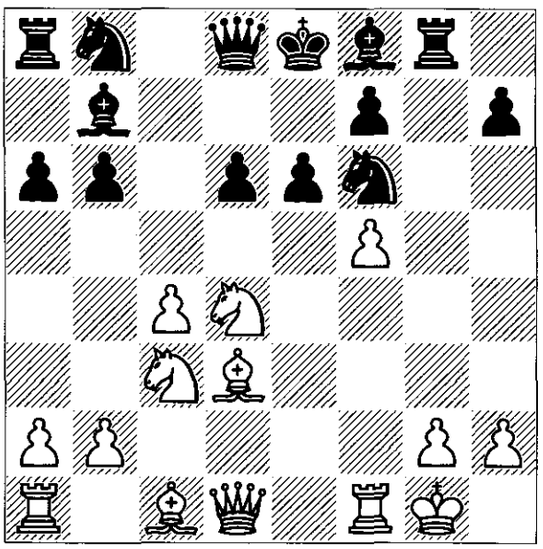
The king joins in the fight supporting the passed pawn and Black wins without problems.

44 ♔f3 ♔c6 45 ♖e2 ♖d5 46 g5 ♖f5+ 47 ♔g4 ♔d5 48 h4 e5 49 ♔g3 ♖f4 50 ♘f2 ♗d6 51 ♖d2+ ♔e6 52 ♘g4 ♗c7 53 ♖f2 ♖f5 54 ♖e2 e4+ 55 ♔g2 ♖f4 56 ♘f2 ♖xh4 0-1

Exercise 15

Leon Hoyos – Spraggett

Cali 2007



How should White defend against the attack on g2? The obvious answers are 12 g3 and 12 ♘f3.

12 ♘e4!!

White reminds Black that his king is still in the centre. After this counterblow both kings will be in danger and eventually White's lead in development will tell. These are just general ideas, however – it is necessary to calculate accurately.

12...e5

Trying to keep the centre closed. If 12...♗xe4? 13 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 14 fxe6 ♖a7, there are several moves that give White an irresistible attack; e.g., 15 ♕f3 or 15 exf7+ ♖xf7 16 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 17 ♕h5+.

12...♘xe4? 13 fxe6 is no good for Black either: 13...♖xg2+ 14 ♔xg2 ♘c3+ 15 ♔g1 ♘xd1 and White wins back the queen by 16 exf7+ ♔d7 17 ♗f5+ ♔e7 (or 17...♔c7 18 ♘e6+) 18 ♗g5+ with a winning position. Or 13...♖g7 14 exf7+ ♔d7 15 ♗h6 ♖xg2+ 16 ♔xg2 ♕h4 17 ♕f3!, winning; e.g., 17...♘c5 18 ♕xb7+ ♘xb7 19 ♗f5+, followed by 20 ♘e6+ and 21 ♗xf8.

13 ♘e6!

Opening lines anyway at the cost of a piece but material concerns take a back seat when it comes to king safety.

The engines like 'quieter' moves such as 13 ♖e1.

13...fxe6

If 13...♕e7, there can follow 14 ♗g5.

14 fxe6 ♗xe4 15 ♗xe4 ♖a7 16 ♕f3 ♗g7?

Black had defended in the best possible way but now he goes astray. The strongest was 16...♖g4!, followed by 17...♖ag7, or 17...♗g7, when the pin ♗g5 of the game is no longer possible. Although the black king will never be safe, there would still be lots of fight ahead.

16...♘xe4? doesn't work because of the nice blow 17 ♕f7+! ♖xf7 18 exf7+ ♔d7 19 fxg8♕, winning.

17 ♗g5 ♖f8 18 ♗xf6!

With the elimination of the f6-knight, the white queen has no more obstacles to come into play. This is decisive.

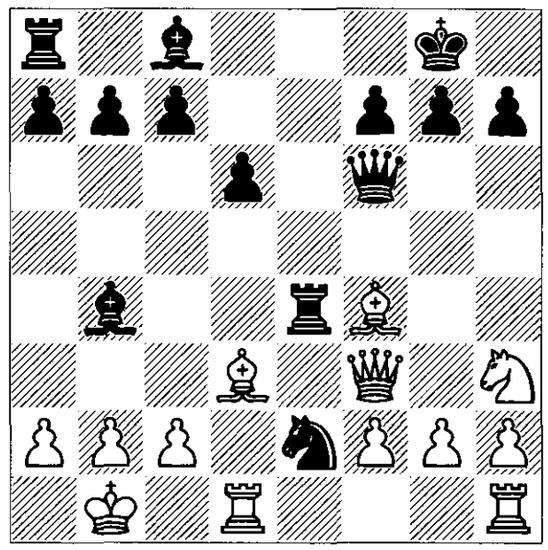
18...♖xf6 19 ♕h5+ ♔f8 20 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 21 ♕h6+ ♔g8 22 ♖f1 1-0

If 22...♗g5, the elegant 23 e7! ♕xe7 24 ♗d5+ wins.

Exercise 16

Nepomniashchy – Vallejo

Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2007



Black has several pieces compromised. If the rook retreats, the e2-knight falls. 14...♖xf4?! 15 ♘xf4 ♘xf4 is not enough due to the fork 16 ♕e4!, and although Black gets some pawns for the exchange, ending up well off from a material perspective, White has greater activity, which may have more weight.

The black pieces are compromised, as we have said, but for the time being they are in very active positions, right in the heart of White's territory. This is something ephemeral, that can

very rapidly disappear, but since it is tied to the absence of defenders of the white king, it allows Black to exploit it in spectacular fashion.

14...♗a3!! 15 bxa3

It would be sad to reconcile oneself to an endgame a pawn down after 15 ♗c1 ♕xf3 16 gxf3, when it is very difficult to hold on, but objectively this was best.

15...♘c3+ 16 ♔c1 ♘xa2+ 17 ♔b1 ♘c3+ 18 ♔c1 ♗xh3! 19 ♗xe4 ♗xg2!!

This nice blow is the key to the combination – Black obtains a big material advantage by distracting the white queen.

20 ♕xg2

Vallejo points out that after 20 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 21 ♕xg2 ♕xf4+ 22 ♔b2 ♘xd1+ 23 ♖xd1 ♕e5+ 24 ♔b3 ♕b5+ 25 ♔c3 ♖e8 Black obtains a winning advantage.

20...♕xf4+ 21 ♔b2 ♘xe4!

It is in Black's interest to keep the queens for the time being due to the exposed situation of the white king.

22 ♖d4 ♕f6 23 ♕xe4 c5 24 ♖e1 h5 25 ♕f4 ♕xd4+

The rest is simple – Black converts his big material advantage without difficulties.

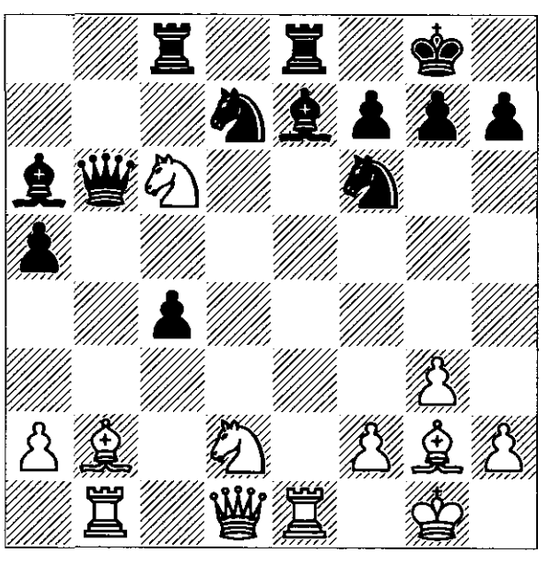
26 ♕xd4 cxd4 27 ♖e7 b6 28 a4 g5 29 ♔b3 ♔g7 30 ♖c7 ♖e8 31 ♖xa7 ♖e2 32 ♖b7 ♖xf2 33 ♖xb6 ♖xh2 34 a5 ♖e2 35 a6 ♖e8 36 a7 ♖a8 0-1

Black's passed pawns decide.

Exercise 17

Krasenkow – Nakamura

Barcelona 2007



White has just played 20 ♘c6, threatening the discovered attack 21 ♗xf6. Black finds the drawback of this idea, making this game immortal.

20...♖xc6! 21 ♗xf6?

This was the idea – needless to say 21 ♗xc6? ♕xc6 is losing but there was still a fighting chance.

"White's last hope to survive was 21 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 22 ♗a3 ♖e5 23 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 though his chance would still be slim, as Black's rooks dominate the queen, and the passed c-pawn will become dangerous" (Nakamura).

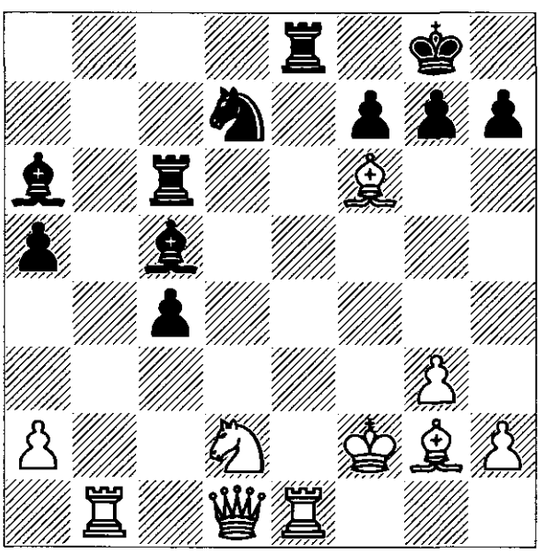
21...♕xf2+!!

This finish is inextricably connected to other similar spectacular examples, such as Ed.Lasker-Thomas, London 1912, Averbakh-Kotov, Zurich Candidates 1953 and Cifuentes-Zviagintsev, Wijk aan Zee 1995.

22 ♔xf2

If 22 ♔h1 Black simply captures the f6-bishop.

22...♗c5+ *(D)*



23 ♔f3

After 23 ♔f1, the winning line is 23...c3+! (not 23...♖xf6+?? 24 ♗f3 c3+ 25 ♔g2, and the king escapes) 24 ♖e2 c2!.

23 ♗d4 ♗xd4+ 24 ♔f3 ♖f6+ 25 ♔g4 ♘e5+! 26 ♔g5 ♗c8! is similar to the game.

23...♖xf6+ 24 ♔g4 ♘e5+!

This is a key move of the sacrifice, allowing the a6-bishop to join in the attack via c8. This was the move Krasenkow overlooked. He thought the queen sacrifice only gave a draw

through perpetual check with the rook along the sixth rank.

25 ♔g5

Black mates after 25 ♖xe5 ♗c8+! 26 ♖f5 (or 26 ♔h4 ♖xe5 27 g4 ♗f2+ 28 ♔h3 ♖h5#) 26...♗xf5+ 27 ♔h4 ♖h6+ 28 ♔g5 ♗c8.

25...♖g6+ 26 ♔h5

If 26 ♔f4, the finish is 26...♘d3+ 27 ♔f3 ♖f6+ 28 ♔g4 ♗c8+ 29 ♔h4 ♖xe1 30 ♕h5 ♖f4+! 31 gxf4 ♗f2+ 32 ♔g5 f6#.

26...f6

Or 26...♗c8 27 ♘e4 ♗e7, and mate.

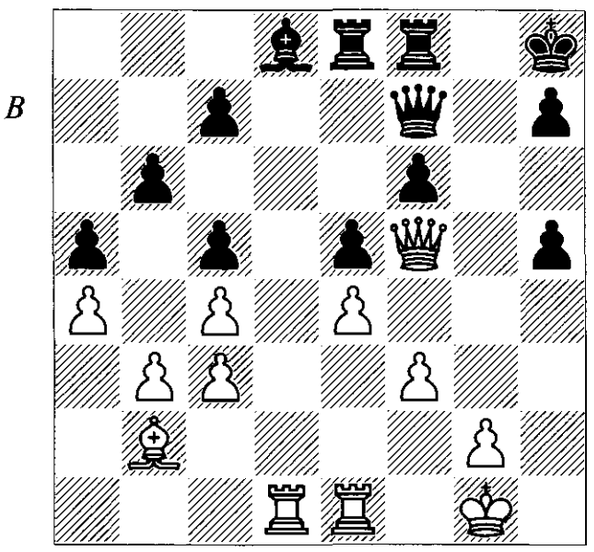
27 ♖xe5 ♖xe5+ 28 ♔h4 ♗c8! 0-1

Closing the net with 29 g4 allows mate in two by 29...♗f2+ 30 ♔h3 ♖h6#, whereas 29 ♗d5+ ♖xd5 30 g4 ♖d3 only lengthens the game a few moves.

Exercise 18

Kamsky – Ki. Georgiev

FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007



Black's position is suspect: his light squares are very weak and the extra pawn is an insufficient consolation; furthermore there is the threat of invasion by 30 ♖d7.

However, White's b2-bishop hasn't entered the game yet so the extra tempo Black has at his disposal gives him some hope. How should Black defend?

29...♖e6?

This prevents ♖d7 for the time being but is very passive.

In fact, the threat of ♖d7 was not so serious, and Black had to make the most of the half-open file by playing 29...♖g8! (or 29...♕g6!) and after 30 ♖d7 ♕g6 31 ♕h3 (Black holds after 31 ♕xg6 hxg6 32 ♖ed1 f5 33 ♗c1 f4) 31...♖e7! the rook exchange, weakening White's back rank, is important: 32 ♖ed1 ♖xd7 33 ♖xd7 ♕g5!, preventing ♗c1, and Black's position is fully playable.

30 ♔f2! ♖d6 31 ♖xd6 cxd6 32 ♖h1 ♕g6 33 ♖xh5

White has won back the pawn and his b2-bishop is about to enter the game – his greater activity will be felt, with a great advantage for him.

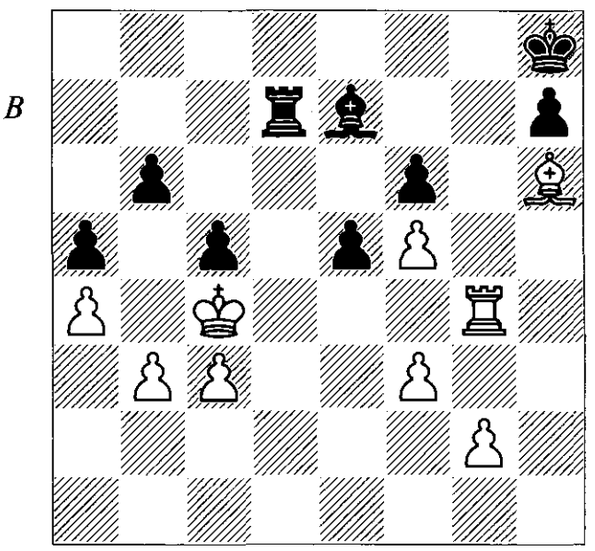
33...♕xf5 34 exf5!

Making way for the white king to infiltrate via the light squares.

34...♖g8 35 ♗c1 ♖g7 36 ♗h6 ♖d7 37 ♔e2 ♗e7 38 ♖h4 ♖d8 39 ♔d3 d5

Stopping ♔e4-d5 but another path is open via c4 and b5.

40 cxd5 ♖xd5+ 41 ♔c4 ♖d7 42 ♖g4! *(D)*



The black king won't be able to join the game whereas the white king will command the board.

42...♗d8 43 ♔b5 ♖f7

It is not possible to become active with 43...♖d3? due to 44 ♖g7 (44 ♗g7+ also wins) 44...♖xc3 45 ♖f7.

44 ♔c6!

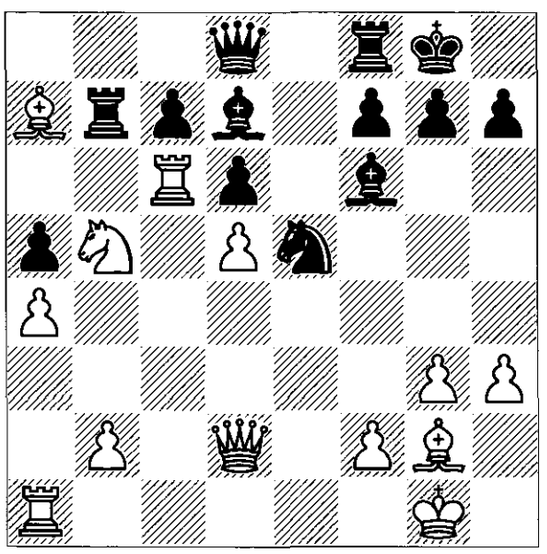
The rest is simple.

44...♖a7 45 ♗f8 h5 46 ♖g6 ♔h7 47 c4 ♖f7 48 ♖h6+ ♔g8 49 ♗d6 ♗e7 50 ♗c7 ♖g7 51 ♖g6 ♖xg6 52 fxg6 ♔g7 53 ♔d7 ♗f8 54 ♗xb6 ♔xg6 55 ♗xa5 1-0

Exercise 19

Hernandez Estevez – Garcia Castro

Mondariz Balneario 2008



The position is odd: White's pieces are concentrated on the queenside and he intends to play 24 ♖ac1 increasing the pressure on the weakness of c7. The black pieces are neither particularly active nor threatening but there is a tactical weakness in White's camp, which makes White vulnerable – do you see what it is?

23...♗xc6?

Missing his chance. White's tactical weakness is the location of the king on g1 together with the queen on d2, inviting a knight fork. This allowed 23...♗xh3!. With the disappearance of the h3-pawn the white king ends up exposed – he will miss his pieces placed far away on the queenside. There are then several possibilities:

a) One that doesn't work is 24 f4? ♘xc6 25 dxc6 ♖xa7 26 ♘xa7 ♕a8! (a *zwischenzug* that wins a tempo) 27 ♘b5 ♗xg2 28 ♕xg2 ♖e8 29 ♔h2 ♖e7, with an extra pawn and a great superiority.

b) 24 ♕xa5 is possible, capturing another pawn but leaving the king more helpless. After 24...♕d7 (or 24...♕c8) 25 ♖xc7 (25 ♕a6 ♖xa7 26 ♘xa7 ♕f5 27 ♕e2 ♗xg2 28 ♔xg2 ♘xc6 29 dxc6 ♕c5 is very good for Black) 25...♕g4! it becomes apparent that the white pieces are too far away from the king: 26 ♗xh3 (not 26 ♖xb7? ♘f3+ 27 ♔h1 {27 ♔f1 ♕c4#} 27...♕h5, and mate in two moves) 26...♕xh3, with advantage. Black threatens mate, and also in passing the pin 27...♗d8.

24 dxc6 ♖xa7 25 ♘xa7 ♘c4 26 ♕c2 d5?!

Better was 26...♘b6, but not 26...♘xb2? 27 ♖b1 ♕b8 28 ♘b5, when White wins material.

27 ♖d1

The rook steps out of the f6-bishop's gaze, and with gain of tempo. Now the weakness of d5 is something to worry about.

27...♘b6 28 b4!

Obtaining a passed pawn.

28...d4?

It was necessary to play 28...axb4 29 a5, and here the far-from-obvious 29...♕b8! 30 ♘b5 (if 30 axb6?, there follows 30...♕xb6 31 ♕a4 ♖a8) 30...♘c4, when there is still a fight ahead.

29 bxa5 ♘d5 30 ♘b5 ♘e7 31 a6

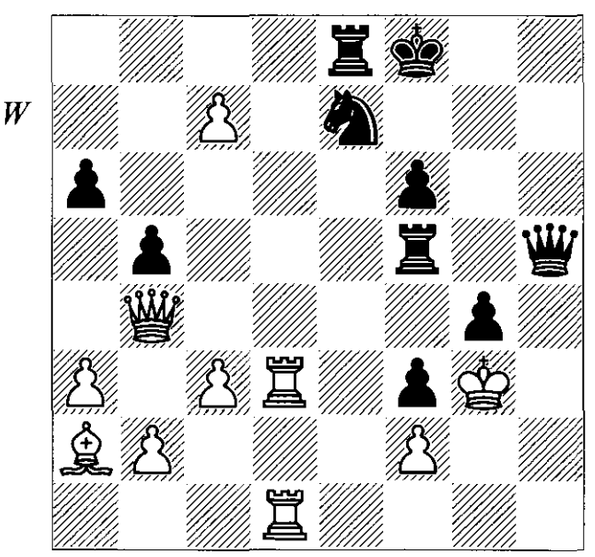
This pawn is decisive.

31...♕a8 32 a7 ♘c8 33 ♕c5 ♖d8 34 ♖d3 ♗e7 35 ♕e5 ♗f6 36 ♕xc7 ♘e7 37 ♕b7 1-0

Exercise 20

Inarkiev – Kazhgaleev

Moscow 2008



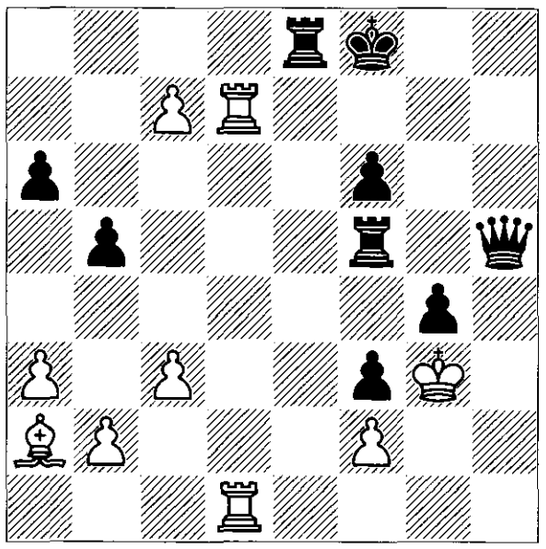
White is on the brink of being mated: it seems almost inevitable. But it is his turn, and here the saying "he who strikes first strikes twice" applies.

41 ♕xe7+!! ♔xe7

If 41...♖xe7, there follows 42 c8♕+, when after 42...♖e8 43 ♕xe8+!, White wins the queen back, ending up a piece to the good. The refutation of 42...♔g7 is more deeply concealed;

White has a draw with 43 ♕g8+ ♔h6 44 ♕h8+ ♖h7 45 ♕f8+, but there is more, and we shall come back to this later on.

42 ♖d7+ ♔f8 *(D)*



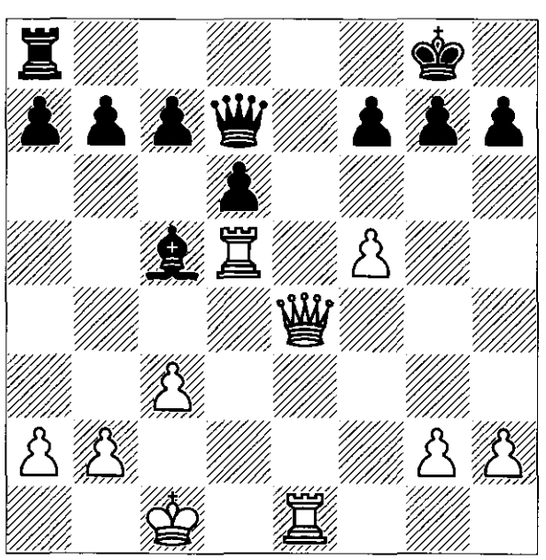
Does White have more than the draw with 43 ♖f7+ ♔g8! 44 ♖e7+ ♔f8 45 ♖f7+, etc.? If 45 ♖xe8+, then 45...♕xe8 holds... this might give you a clue. If you still haven't seen the continuation, you may consider this position as '**Exercise 20a**'. See page 235 for the solution.

Solutions for Chapter 4

Exercise 21

Mieses – Capablanca

Berlin 1913



Black has a pawn for the exchange, which is not enough material, but in a few moves he will obtain more than adequate positional compensation.

The bishop is doing nothing on c5 and Black has the chance to improve it with gain of tempo.

23...c6! 24 ♖d2 d5

Capablanca indicated what his general plan was: in the first place transfer his bishop to f6, from where it defends the kingside and will later on help with the attack; then secure the position of the king by ...h6, and once the black king is safe, start pushing his pawns on the queenside, where he has superiority of forces.

25 ♕f3 ♗e7 26 ♖de2 ♗f6 27 ♕h5 h6 28 g4

Now White is planning h4 and g5 – can Black prevent this?

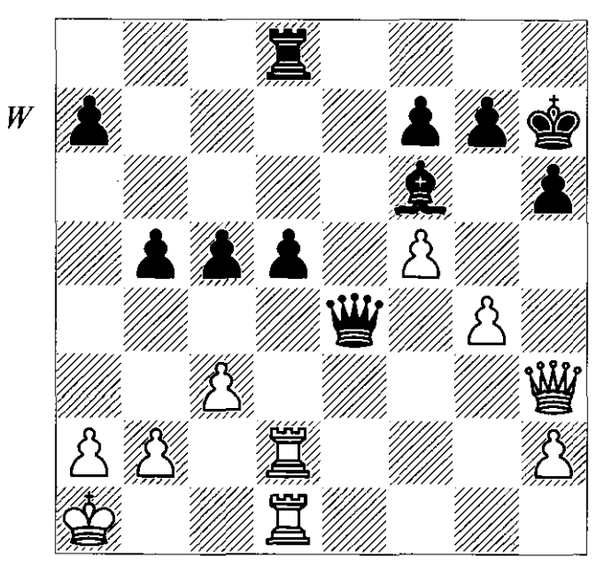
28...♔h7!

Stopping 29 h4?, because White would lose his queen after 29...g6.

29 ♔b1 ♖d8 30 ♖d1 c5 31 ♕h3 ♕a4

The queen improves its position before starting the pawn offensive.

32 ♖ed2 ♕e4+ 33 ♔a1 b5! *(D)*



Threatening ...b4. All of Black's pieces occupy threatening positions and he has a clear plan, while the same cannot be said of White and his forces.

34 ♕g2 ♕a4 35 ♔b1

35 ♖xd5? is not possible due to the reply 35...♕xd1+!.

35...b4

Capablanca noted that "the position now is most interesting and extremely beautiful. It is doubtful if there is any valid defence against Black's best play."

36 cxb4 ♕xb4

Opening the long diagonal has increased the f6-bishop's strength, and on top of that Black has acquired a passed pawn.

37 a3

37 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 38 ♖xd5 is not possible due to 38...♗xb2! and if 39 ♕xb2, then 39...♕e4+ wins.

37...♕a4! 38 ♖xd5 ♖b8 39 ♖1d2 c4 40 ♕g3?

Making Black's task easier, but the defence was very difficult.

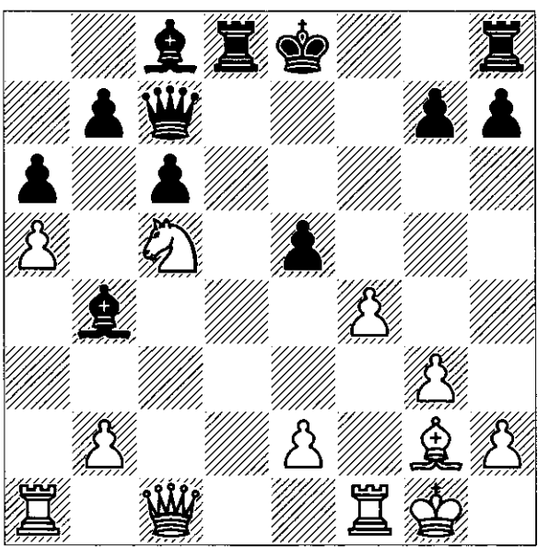
40...♖b3! 41 ♕d6 c3 42 ♖c2 cxb2 43 ♖d3 ♕e4 44 ♖d1 ♖c3 0-1

Deflecting the queen from the defence of a3. 45 ♕d2 is met by 45...♖xa3, with unavoidable mate.

Exercise 22

Alekhine – Euwe

World Ch match (game 21), Ermelo 1935



Black's priority is to solve the problem of his king stuck in the centre. For now he can't do anything about it because 19...0-0?? is met by 20 ♕c4+.

19...♗d2! 20 ♕c4

If 20 ♕c2, then 20...0-0.

20...♖d4! 21 ♕b3

Euwe showed that 21 ♘e6? is refuted by 21...♕f7!, winning material; e.g., 22 ♗xc6+ bxc6 23 ♕xc6+ ♗d7 24 ♕a8+ ♔e7 25 ♕xh8 ♗e3+ 26 ♔g2 ♗xe6, with a winning advantage – the white king is too exposed.

21...exf4 22 gxf4

In the event of 22 ♔h1, Black wouldn't accept the pawn, for this would be very risky. He would instead solve his main problem by 22...♕e7!.

22...♕e7! 23 ♘d3 ♗e6

Black completed his manoeuvre. Now that his king is safe, the bishop-pair and the weaknesses in White's camp will begin to tell.

Euwe pointed out that 23...♕xe2? fails to 24 ♖fe1! ♗e3+ 25 ♔h1 ♖xd3 26 ♕a4 ♕d2 27 ♖ad1.

24 ♕a3 ♗c4 25 ♔h1 ♕xa3 26 ♖xa3 0-0 27 ♖a4 ♖fd8 28 ♖a3 ♗xd3 29 exd3 ♖b4!

Stronger than 29...♖xd3 30 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 31 ♖d1.

30 ♖f2 ♖xb2 31 ♗f1

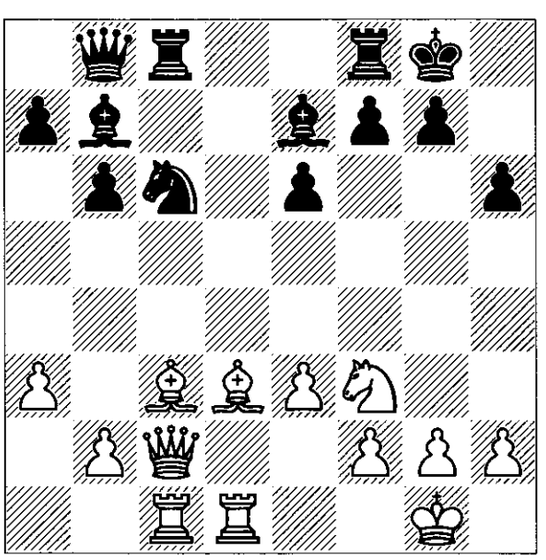
Euwe indicated that 31 ♗e4! is more resilient, although after 31...♖b1+ 32 ♔g2 ♗e3 33 ♖f3 ♖b2+! 34 ♔g3 ♗g1, a difficult defence awaits him.

31...♖d4 32 f5 ♖f4 33 ♖xf4 ♗xf4 34 h3 ♗d6 35 ♖a1 ♔f7 36 d4 ♔f6 37 ♖e1 ♗b4 38 ♖a1 ♖d2 39 ♗c4 ♖xd4 40 ♗e6 ♖d8 41 ♗b3 0-1

Exercise 23

Petrosian – Smyslov

USSR Ch, Moscow 1961



All of White's pieces are better placed than Black's, whose kingside is a bit exposed. But while the two white bishops exert some pressure, it can't be said that White is attacking. In a few moves everything will change.

White begins an elegant manoeuvre that from this game on became typical, as Kasparov

pointed out. He doubts whether Black's position is defensible, although there is no direct threat yet.

18 ♕a4!

"A simple move, but one of murderous strength. The switch of the queen to the kingside enables White to obtain an irresistible attack." (Petrosian).

18...♖fd8

Against 18...g6 Kasparov recommended both 19 h4 and 19 ♕g4 h5 20 ♕h3 ♖cd8 21 g4, in both cases with a very strong attack for White.

19 ♕e4 g6 20 ♕g4 h5

If 20...♔h7?, the sequence 21 ♗xg6+! fxg6 22 ♕xe6 ♖f8 23 ♖d7 ♖c7 24 ♘e5 wins.

21 ♕h3

With the idea of playing 22 g4.

21...f5?

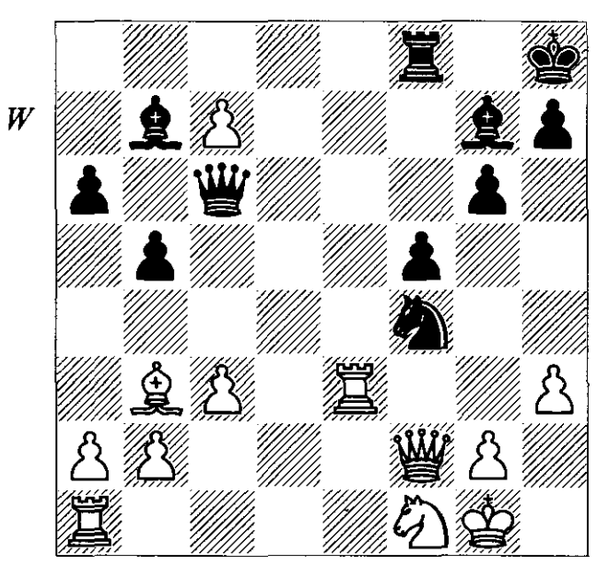
Kasparov deeply analysed this position in *My Great Predecessors Volume 3*, reaching the conclusion that Black's last defensive resource was 21...e5.

22 ♗c4 ♖xd1+ 23 ♖xd1 ♔f7 24 e4! ♕f4 25 ♖e1 ♕g4 26 exf5 ♕xc4 27 fxg6+ ♔e8 28 g7! e5 29 ♕xh5+ ♔d7 30 ♖d1+ ♗d6 31 ♗xe5 ♘d4 32 ♘xd4 1-0

Exercise 24

Franco – Rubinetti

Pan American Ch, San Pedro de Jujuy 1981



White is the exchange ahead but Black exerts some annoying pressure against the white king. It is possible, and good, to activate the passive a1-rook with 26 ♖ae1, since 26...♘xg2? doesn't work due to 27 ♖e6 ♕xc7 28 ♖e7, followed by ♖xb7. After 26...♗f6, however, White would have to play as in the game.

26 ♗d1!

With this manoeuvre all the problems of the white king's position are over and the material advantage becomes decisive.

26...♕xc7 27 ♗f3 ♘d5 28 ♖d3 ♘f6 29 ♗xb7

Every exchange gets White closer to the goal.

29...♕xb7 30 ♖ad1 ♘e4 31 ♕f3 ♗h6 32 ♖d7 ♕b6+ 33 ♔h2 ♗g7 34 ♕e3 ♕b8+ 35 ♔g1 a5 36 ♕a7!

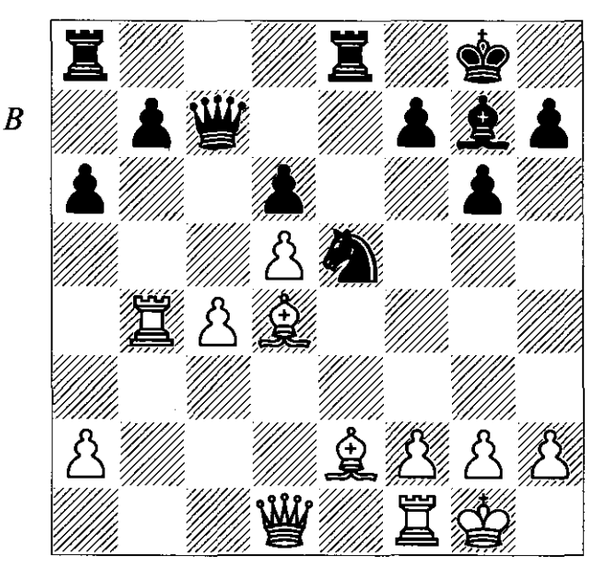
With the exchange of queens, all resistance will be squashed.

36...♕xa7+ 37 ♖xa7 a4 38 a3 ♖b8 39 ♖dd7 ♗f8 40 ♖ab7 ♗c5+ 41 ♔h2 ♖xb7 42 ♖xb7 ♘d6 1-0

Exercise 25

Polugaevsky – Petrosian

USSR Ch, Moscow 1983



Which piece should be improved? The e5-knight is centralized and the a8-rook is out of play so... improve the rook? However, it's still unclear where it should go.

18...♘d7!

The knight was centralized but it was also in the way of both the e8-rook and the g7-bishop. Now it has an excellent position on c5 allowing the other pieces more play.

19 ♗e3

Needless to say, the endgame after 19 ♗xg7? ♔xg7 is a dream for Black.

19...♖xe3!

'Petrosian's signature' – Black could keep the balance with 19...♘c5, but he carries out an interesting exchange sacrifice, so characteristic of his style. He gets positional compensation due to the strong c5-knight and the pressure from all his pieces, to which he will soon add a pawn.

From a practical point of view, the compensation is even greater because Black's subsequent play is easy and pleasant, whereas White's is not.

20 fxe3 ♘c5 21 ♕c2 ♖e8 22 ♖f3

Petrosian recommended 22 ♖bb1 at once.

22...♗h6 23 ♕c3 ♕e7

The pawn cannot be protected: after 24 ♔h1! ♗xe3 25 ♖b1 ♗g5, followed by ...f5, Black has full compensation but a long struggle lies ahead.

However, Polugaevsky now made a gross blunder that finished the game at once.

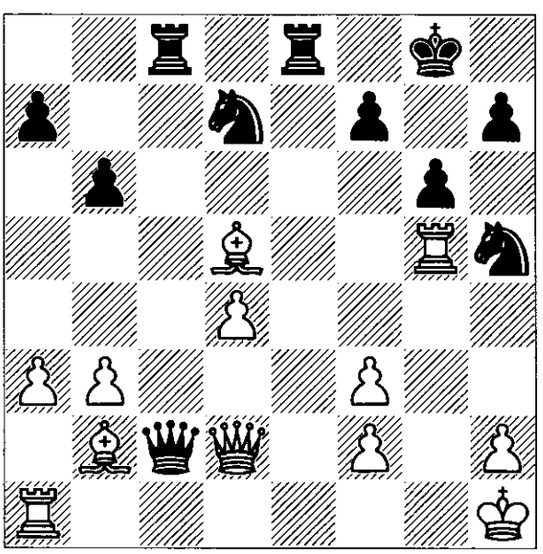
24 ♖b6?? ♘a4 0-1

Exercise 26

Franco – Larsen

Lugano (open) 1989

W



White is a pawn up but his structure is weak and his pieces lack coordination. Black, who controls the two open files, has apparently managed to infiltrate very strongly into the heart of White's position. The white queen dare not move away, since it must defend the b2-bishop and the 'forced' 22 ♕xc2? ♖xc2 23 ♗c1 ♖xf2 24 ♔g1 ♖c2 is dreadful.

22 ♗c1!

A move that may be overlooked when calculating the position several moves in advance. Such an undeveloping move is seldom effective but here it allows White to regroup his pieces to good effect and neutralize the activity of the black rooks.

22...♘df6

Black does not have enough compensation for the pawn after 22...♕xd2 23 ♗xd2 ♖c2 24 ♗e3, since he can no longer infiltrate along the e-file and the c2-rook on its own cannot do much.

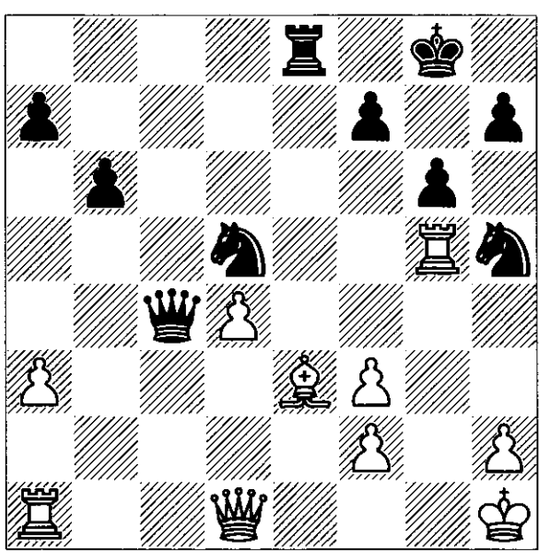
23 ♗c4 ♖xc4!?

23...♕xd2 24 ♗xd2 would be almost capitulation, for White's extra pawn and his two bishops would be important indeed.

24 bxc4 ♕xc4 25 ♕d1 ♘d5 26 ♗e3!? *(D)*

Elegant, although no better than 26 ♖e5 ♖d8 27 ♗h6, when all the white pieces manage to develop and the extra exchange will be converted soon.

B



26...♘g7

26...♘xe3? didn't work due to 27 fxe3 ♖xe3 28 ♖xh5 gxh5 29 ♕g1+, winning. Black could capture the pawn after 26...f6, but this weakens the king, and after 27 ♖c1 ♕b5 28 ♖g1 ♘xe3 29 fxe3 ♖xe3 White forces a rook exchange with 30 ♖e1, thanks to the weakness of the black king's position, with a winning endgame.

27 ♖c1 ♕b5 28 ♖e5 ♘e6 29 a4 ♕d7 30 ♕b3 ♖d8 31 ♗h6

White has completely solved his coordination problems. There follows a 'give and take' after which the extra exchange is converted.

31...f6 32 ♖e4 ♔f7 33 ♖ce1 ♖e8 34 ♗d2 h5 35 a5 b5 36 a6 g5 37 ♗b4 h4 38 ♗d2 b4 39 ♕c4 ♖c8 40 ♕e2 ♖c6 41 f4!

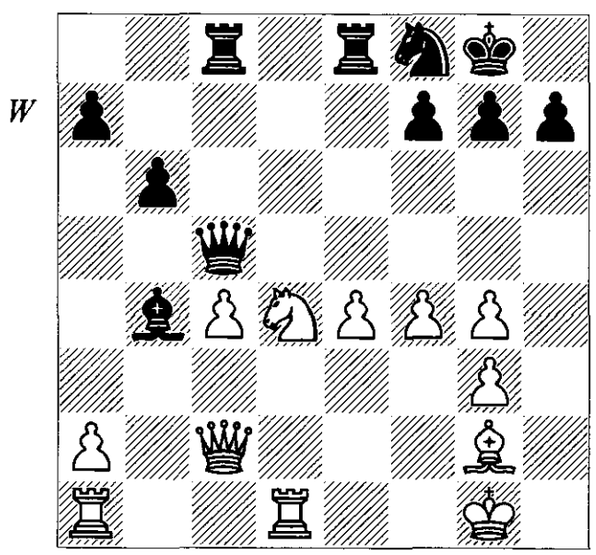
Exploiting the exposure of the black king.

41...gxf4 42 ♕h5+ ♔g7 43 ♕f5 ♘f8 44 ♖g1+ 1-0

Exercise 27

Van Wely – Tkachev

Enghien-les-Bains 2001



White is a pawn up but he seems to be in trouble. His c4-pawn is doomed, his d4-knight pinned. If he improves its position he has reasons to be optimistic though: he has a powerful centre and the possibility of attacking the black king with an eventual ♘f5. How should White solve his problems?

29 a3!!

A beautiful pawn sacrifice, activating the passive a1-rook and winning tempi to unpin the knight since the black queen must defend the a3-bishop.

29...♗xa3

29...♗a5 is the alternative, and is not totally satisfactory either, in view of 30 ♔h2 ♕xc4 31 ♕xc4 ♖xc4 32 ♘f5, followed by 33 e5.

30 ♔h2! ♗b4 31 ♘f5

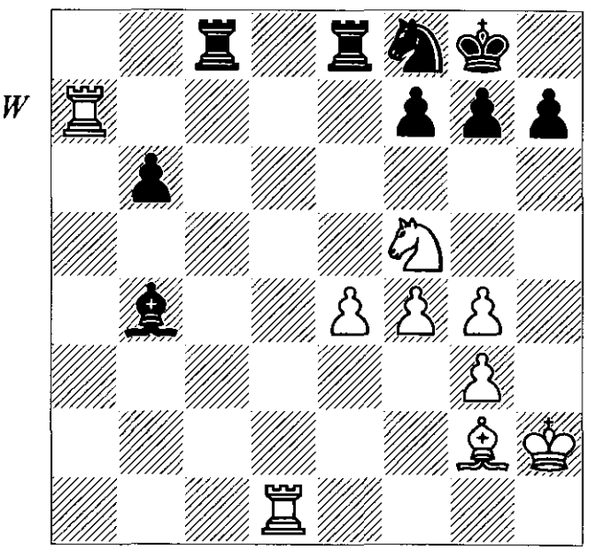
Threatening 32 ♘d6.

31...♕xc4 32 ♕xc4 ♖xc4 33 ♖xa7

White has won his pawn back and is much more active – Black's defence is difficult.

33...♖cc8 *(D)*

If 33...♖ec8, Van Wely was planning to play 34 ♖b1 followed by 35 e5, although there are other possibilities, such as 34 ♖a4!, threatening 35 ♖xb4.



34 e5 ♖cd8?! 35 ♗d5!

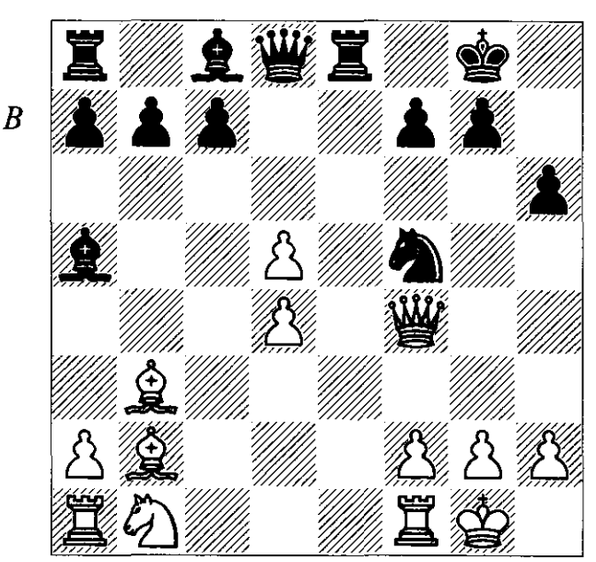
White aims to eliminate the pawns in front of Black's king. The obstacles to creating several passed pawns, which are decisive, are removed.

35...♘e6 36 ♗xe6 fxe6 37 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 38 ♘xg7 ♖d3 39 ♘xe6 ♗e1 40 g5 ♗xg3+ 41 ♔g2 1-0

Exercise 28

Morozevich – Adams

Wijk aan Zee 2001



The position is odd: White's bishop-pair is inactive for the time being. Which black piece can be improved?

Adams suggested 17...♕d6! since the endgame after 18 ♕xd6 ♘xd6 is good for Black because of his better structure.

17...♗b4!

The middlegame is also promising given that the white king is exposed and the black pieces can quickly come into the attack.

18 ♘a3

Heading to e5. After 18 ♘c3 ♗d6 19 ♕d2 ♕h4 20 f4 ♗d7 Black's position is promising: White's three minor pieces don't have a clear future, whereas the black pieces are harmoniously placed.

18...♗d6 19 ♕d2 ♕h4

19...♘h4 is interesting too.

20 g3

Now if 20 f4, given that e4 is not under control, there follows 20...♖e4.

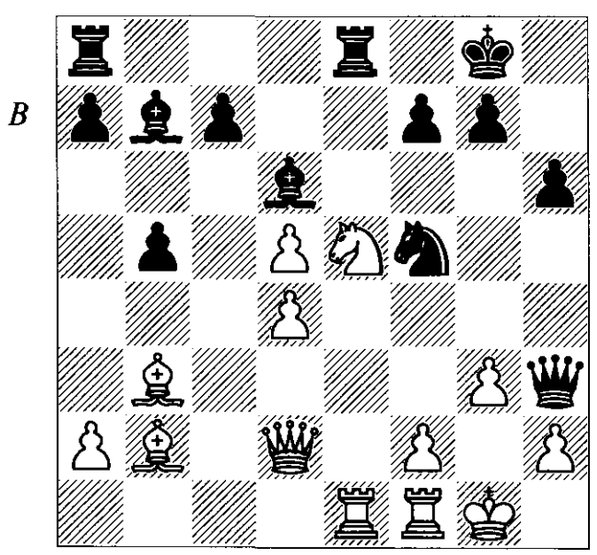
20...♕h3 21 ♘c4 b5

There is nothing to be gained by the immediate attack 21...♘h4?!. There can follow 22 f4 ♗g4 23 ♘e5 ♗xe5 24 dxe5 ♘f3+ 25 ♖xf3 ♗xf3 26 ♖f1 and the centre provides good compensation for the exchange.

22 ♘e5?

22 ♘xd6 is better. Then Adams suggests the sacrifice 22...♘xd6 23 ♖ac1 ♘c4 24 ♗xc4 bxc4, with a clear advantage to Black.

22...♗b7 23 ♖ae1?! *(D)*



This leaves the white pieces tactically exposed. The position of the queen and the rook on the same diagonal gives Black the initiative.

23...a5! 24 a3

If 24 ♕d3, Black plays 24...a4 25 ♗c2?! ♗xd5 26 f3 ♖xe5! 27 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 28 ♕xf5 (or 28 dxe5 ♗c4) 28...♕xf5 29 ♗xf5 ♗d6, with an extra pawn and a winning endgame.

24...b4! 25 axb4

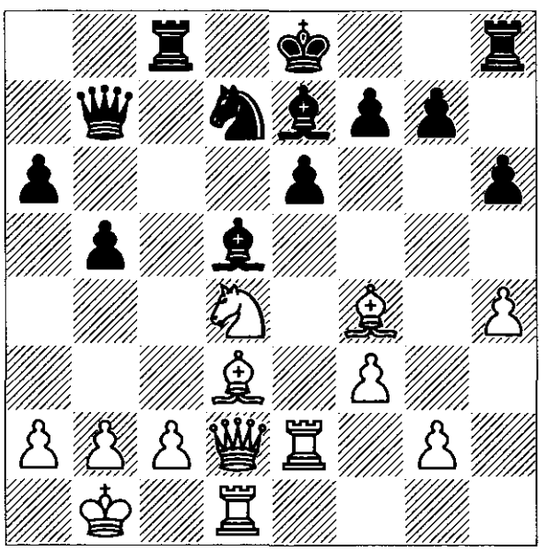
Adams also points out that after 25 a4 ♗a6 neither 26 ♗c4 ♗xc4 27 ♘xc4 ♘h4 28 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 29 f4 ♗xf4! nor 26 ♘c4 ♘h4 27 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 28 f4 ♗xf4 provides White with an adequate defence – Black has a mating attack in both cases.

25...♗xb4 26 ♗c3 ♗xc3 27 ♕xc3 ♘h4 0-1

Exercise 29

Galkin – Khalifman

Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2005



The kings will castle on opposite flanks so it is important to win the attacking race.

Black has left his king in the centre, which is not advisable to do for long, but the hasty 20...0-0?! can be met by 21 ♘f5 or 21 ♗xh6, when 21...gxh6? loses to 22 ♕xh6.

20...♘c5!

Simple and strong – Black prepares to castle kingside but first he exchanges one of the potentially dangerous pieces in White's attack against his king.

21 h5 ♘xd3 22 ♕xd3 0-0

Better than 22...♗c4 23 ♕e4. Black has a bishop-pair that will soon become aggressive. This cancels any risk to his own king.

23 ♕e3 ♗c5 24 ♕c1

24 ♗xh6 gxh6 25 ♕xh6 doesn't work because Black defends by preventing the other white pieces from helping the queen with 25...♗xd4 26 ♖xd4 ♖c4!, having ...f5 or ...f6 in reserve so that the black queen can come from b7 to the kingside.

24...♖fd8 25 ♗e3 a5

Now there is just one side attacking – White's defence is difficult.

26 ♖ee1 a4 27 ♘e2 ♗b4 28 ♖h1 e5

Restricting the white pieces and preparing a decisive regrouping to speed up the attack.

29 ♘g3 ♕c6! 30 ♖h4 ♗e7 31 ♖hh1 ♕e6!

Forcing more weaknesses in the white king's position.

32 b3

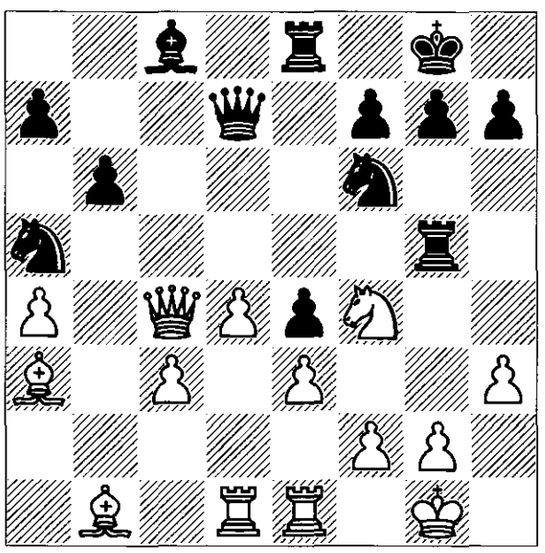
If 32 a3, there would logically follow 32...b4, decisively opening the file.

32...axb3 33 axb3 ♗xb3 0-1

Exercise 30

I. Sokolov – J. Polgar

Hoogeveen 2006



White has an extra pawn. The question is whether he has to return it or can keep it. It is necessary to evaluate whether Black's attack is dangerous.

25 ♕b4?

Very optimistic. It was best not to move the queen so far away. After 25 ♕e2! ♕xa4 (not 25...♘d5?! 26 ♗b4! ♘c6 27 ♖c1!, and White still has his extra pawn) 26 ♗b4 ♘c6 27 ♗c2 ♕a6 the endgame seems better for White.

25...♘d5!

Removing a vital defender.

26 ♘xd5 ♕xd5

Black only had a draw with 26...♖xg2+? 27 ♔xg2 ♕xh3+ 28 ♔g1 ♕g4+ 29 ♔f1 ♗a6+ 30 ♗d3 exd3 31 ♘c7! ♗c4 32 ♖d2 ♕h3+ 33 ♔g1 ♕g4+, as Polgar points out.

27 h4

Another weakening move, but the absence of the white queen is felt after 27 ♔h2 ♗xh3! 28 gxh3 ♕f5 29 f4 ♖h5, and mate.

If White tries to bring the queen closer, even by giving back the pawn with 27 ♕d6, Black can play 27...♕xd6 and 28...♗xh3 with a good endgame, although Polgar was planning to play 27...♕f5, and if 28 ♔h1?, the king falls after the nice combination 28...♘c4 29 ♕c6 ♗d7! 30 ♕xc4 ♖xg2! 31 ♔xg2 ♕f3+ 32 ♔h2 ♗xh3! 33 ♖g1 ♗e6.

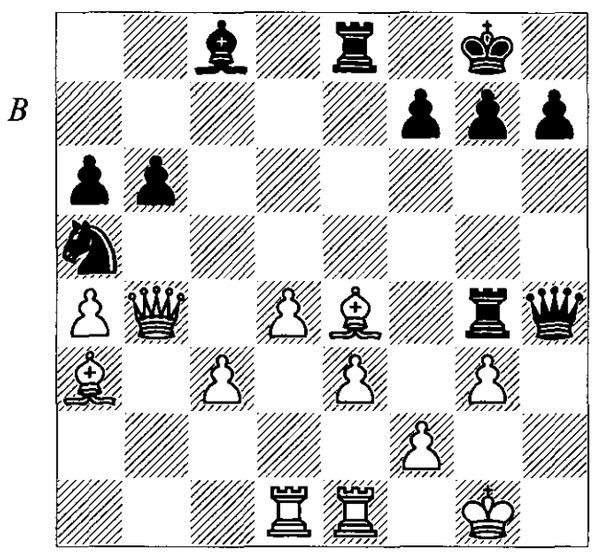
27...♖g4 28 ♕b5 ♕d8! 29 g3

If 29 ♗d6, then Black plays 29...♗d7 followed by 30...♕xh4.

29...a6 30 ♕b4

No better is 30 ♕h5 ♘c4 31 ♗c1 (31 ♗b4 is met by 31...♕c7!, threatening both 32...♖xg3+, winning, and 32...a5, capturing the b4-bishop) 31...g6 32 ♕h6 ♘d6, and 33...♘f5.

30...♕xh4 31 ♗xe4 *(D)*



31...♖xg3+!

With this exchange sacrifice, Black weakens the white king's position and seizes the light squares, after which she gets an irresistible attack.

32 fxg3 ♕xe4 33 ♖d2

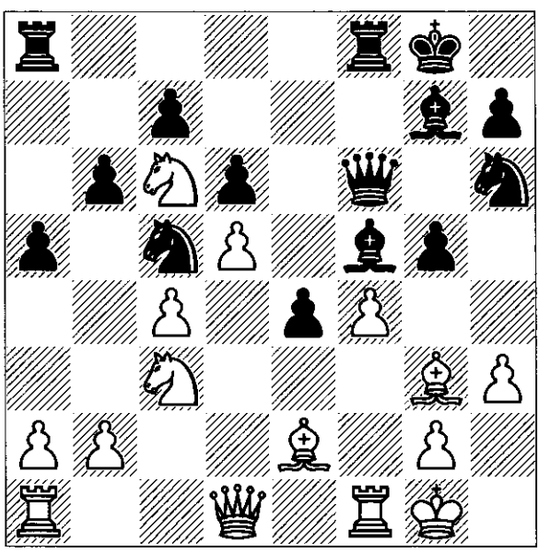
Against 33 d5 Polgar indicates 33...♘c4 34 ♖d4 ♕f3 35 ♕xc4 ♕xg3+ 36 ♔f1 ♗h3+ 37 ♔e2 ♖xe3+ 38 ♔d2 ♕xe1+ 39 ♔c2 ♖e2+, winning.

33...♕f3 34 ♔h2 ♕h5+ 35 ♔g1 ♕f3 36 ♔h2 ♗f5 37 e4 ♗xe4 38 ♖xe4 ♕xe4 39 d5 ♘c4 0-1

Exercise 31

Sashikiran – Topalov

Sofia 2007



Black has an active position with good attacking chances against the white king. He only needs to bring an extra piece into the battle.

19...♗d7!

Leaving its place for the h6-knight, planning to get rid of White's most aggressive piece.

20 ♘b5

Fighting at close range – Black has the better position in any case after 20 ♕d2!? gxf4 (or 20...♗xc6 21 fxg5 ♕d4+ 22 ♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 23 ♔h2 ♘f7 24 dxc6 ♗xc3 25 bxc3 ♘xg5, with an edge for Black) 21 ♗xf4 ♗xc6 22 ♗e3! (better than 22 dxc6 ♕d4+ 23 ♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 24 ♔h2 ♗xc3 25 bxc3 ♘f5, with a more clear advantage to Black because of the tripled pawns) 22...♘f5 23 dxc6 ♕e5 24 ♖ad1 ♘xe3.

20...♗xc6

Topalov didn't like allowing the possibility of a queen check on d5. At the press conference after the game he doubted whether this exchange was best at this point.

Of course general considerations are not decisive in this position, while concrete analysis is.

21 dxc6 ♕xb2 22 ♖b1 ♕xa2 23 ♘xc7 ♘f5!

After this jump "the position is already bad for White." (Topalov).

24 ♗f2?!

Better – particularly from the practical point of view – was 24 ♘xa8 ♘xg3 25 ♖e1, although Black keeps the advantage after 25...♖xa8 26 c7 ♘xe2+ 27 ♖xe2 ♕xc4 28 ♖xb6 ♘a6 29 ♖xd6 ♘xc7 30 ♖c2 ♗c3 31 fxg5 ♖f8.

24...e3! 25 ♗e1

If 25 ♘xa8, now 25...exf2+ 26 ♖xf2 ♗d4, followed by ...♘e4, wins.

The check Black had allowed doesn't save White either. After 25 ♕d5+ ♔h8 26 ♗d3!? exf2+ 27 ♖xf2 ♗d4 28 ♕xd4+ ♘xd4 29 ♖xa2 ♖ac8 30 ♘d5 ♘xd3 31 ♖d1 ♘b3!, Black wins.

25...♘d4!

Sashikiran commented that at the beginning of the tactical exchange he didn't realize the strength of this crushing move.

26 ♘xa8 ♘xe2+ 27 ♔h2 ♘xf4 28 ♖xf4 gxf4 29 ♖xb6 f3 30 ♕d5+ ♘e6

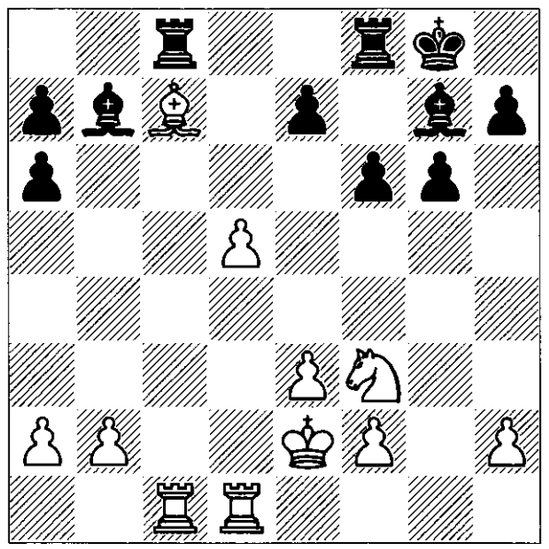
The most elegant, deflecting the queen from f3.

31 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 32 ♕g4 ♗e5+ 33 ♔h1 f2 0-1

Exercise 32

Vallejo – V. Mikhalevski

Calvia 2007



White has the better structure and more active pieces, while the black bishops are not important for now.

15...f5!

Black activates the g7-bishop. "Now the d5-pawn will not have support from the e-pawn. Moreover, White faces some concrete problems." (Mikhalevski).

16 b4?!

Logical, but Black was counting on this. 16 ♖d2 is better.

16...♗b2!

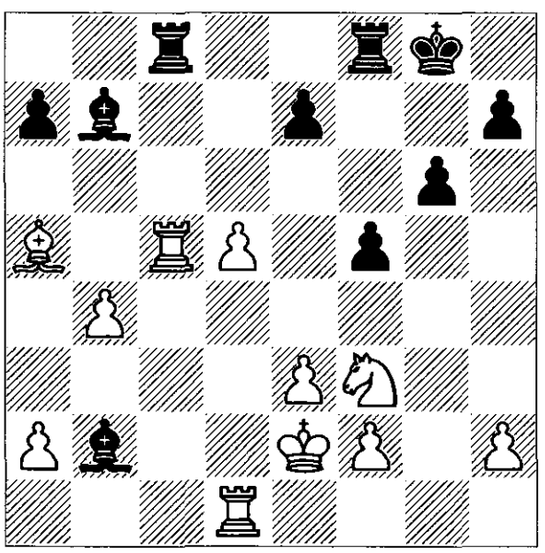
Trying to leave the white pieces uncoordinated.

17 ♖c5?!

As Mikhalevski indicated, this natural move is another mistake. 17 ♖c4! was necessary, when it is not easy for Black to exploit the pin on the c-file.

17...a5! 18 ♗xa5? *(D)*

White should prefer 18 ♖b1 or 18 b5, when Black is only slightly better.



18...♗c3!!

"This brilliant move is the point of Black's previous play. The threats of 19...♗a6+ and 19...♖xc5 turn out to be decisive." (Mikhalevski).

19 ♖d4!

The only practical chance. In the event of 19 ♖xc8 ♗a6+! 20 ♖d3 ♖xc8 21 a4 ♗c4!, there would be no defence.

19...♖xc5 20 bxc5 ♗xd4!

20...♗xa5? is wrong since after 21 ♖a4 ♗d8 22 c6 ♗c8 23 ♖xa7 White obtains compensation for the piece.

21 exd4 ♗xd5

The strong pawn on c5 gives White practical chances but Black displays fine and instructive technique to convert his advantage.

22 ♘e5 ♖b8!

In the first place he activates the rook.

23 a3

23 c6 ♖b2+ 24 ♔d3 ♖xa2 25 c7 ♗b7 26 ♘c6 ♔f8! is insufficient for White.

23...♖b2+ 24 ♔e1 ♖c2!

Stopping the advance of the c-pawn.

25 ♗d2

25 ♔d1 is met by 25...♖xf2 26 c6 ♔f8 27 c7 ♗b7 28 ♘c6 ♔e8 29 ♘xa7 ♔d7, winning, as Mikhalevski indicated.

25...♔f8! 26 a4 ♔e8 27 a5 ♖a2 28 h4 ♖a4 29 ♗c3 f4 30 f3 ♖a3 31 ♗d2 ♖a4 32 ♗c3 ♖a3 33 ♗d2 ♗xf3 34 ♗xf4 ♗d5 35 ♗d2 ♖h3 36 ♗g5 ♖h2!

Black cuts off the white king.

37 ♔d1 ♔d8!

And at last the moment has come to bring the king in.

38 ♔e1 ♖a2 39 ♗d2 ♔c8 40 ♘d3?! ♖a1+! 41 ♔f2 ♖d1 42 ♔e3

If 42 ♔e2, then 42...♖h1 43 ♗g5 ♗c4 decides.

42...♖h1 43 ♘f4 e6

Once the h-pawn falls, the rest, despite the tenacious defence, is simple.

44 ♘xd5 exd5 45 ♔f4 ♖xh4+ 46 ♔e5 ♖h5+ 47 ♔d6 ♖f5 48 ♗h6 a6!

Zugzwang.

49 c6

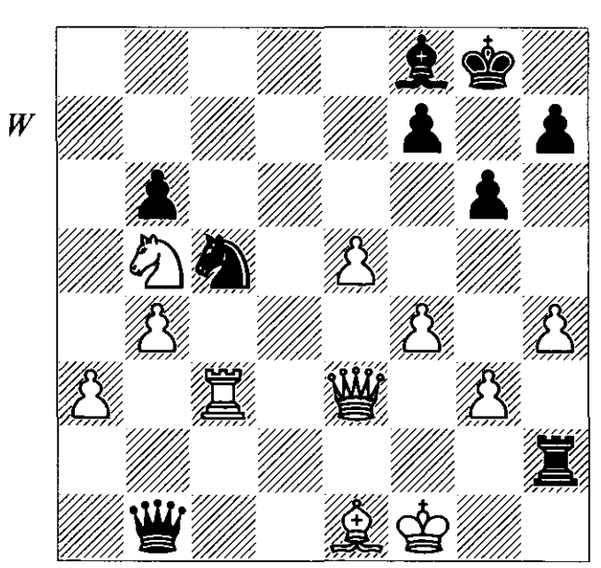
49 ♔c6 is met by 49...g5, and if 49 ♔e6 then 49...♔c7, bringing the king to c6.

49...♖f6+ 50 ♔xd5 ♔c7 51 ♔e5 ♖f5+! 0-1

Exercise 33

Karpov – J. Polgar

Vitoria 2007



Earlier on in this game, Black had ended up with a weak isolated pawn on d5, for which there wasn't sufficient compensation. Karpov

manoeuvred masterfully and, as we can see, that pawn was eventually captured, and then another one fell on a7.

41 ♖c1??

White needed just one move to push the black pieces back and have a fresh start – 41 ♔g1!. After 41...♖a2, even better than 42 ♘d6 ♕b2 43 ♗f2 ♖a1+ 44 ♔h2 ♖f1 45 ♔g2 ♖xf2+ 46 ♕xf2 ♕xc3 47 bxc5 bxc5 48 a4 c4 is 42 ♘d4!, when the black steed must go back to e6, since 42...♘e4? loses to 43 ♖c1 ♕b2 44 ♖c2. After 42...♘e6 43 ♖b3 ♕a1 44 ♘xe6 fxe6 45 ♔f1 ♖h2 46 ♕f3 ♕a2 47 ♖c3 White would have converted his material advantage without major complications. The black bishop cannot enter the game and remains a weakness.

41...♕b2

Threatening mate on g2 and hitting the c1-rook, which allows the c5-knight to sneak into the heart White's camp – the position becomes untenable.

42 ♗f2 ♘e4! 43 ♔g1 ♘xf2 0-1

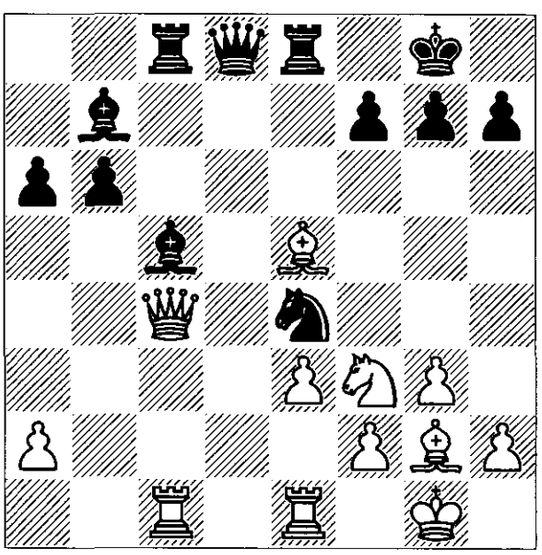
Solutions for Chapter 5

Exercise 34

Uhlmann – Smyslov

Alekhine Memorial, Moscow 1971

W



Black has a menacing position – all his pieces are very active. White must parry the threat of the discovered attack by the c5-bishop, but this is not the only threat Black has.

20 ♕e2?

This will be forcefully refuted because it only eliminates one of the two threats. 20 ♗h3! was necessary, reducing the strength of Black's game. After 20...♗d5 21 ♕d3! (active defence; not 21 ♕xa6? ♖a8 22 ♕b5 ♖xa2, and Black, with his active rook, comes out better off from the pawn exchange, nor 21 ♕c2 ♖c6, keeping the threats on the c-file) 21...♗e6 (now 21...♖c6? is well met by 22 ♖cd1) 22 ♕xd8 ♖cxd8 23 ♗xe6 ♖xe6, with equality.

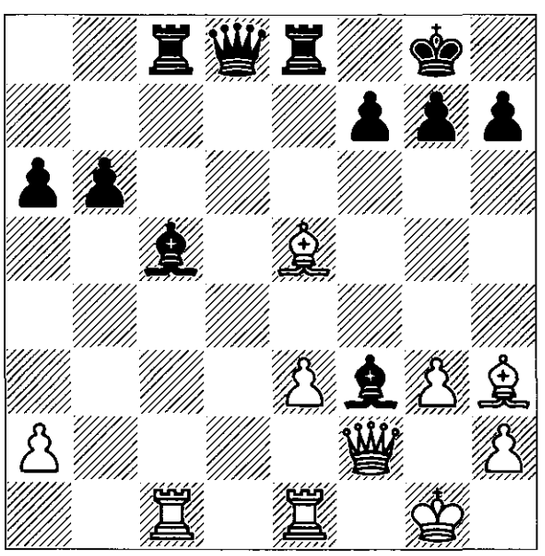
20...♘xf2!

With this nice blow, Black makes the most of the compromised position of the white pieces.

21 ♕xf2 ♗xf3 22 ♗h3 *(D)*

After 22 ♕xf3 ♖xe5 Black keeps his extra pawn, for which White has no compensation.

B



22...♖xe5!

Far more energetic, and better, than 22...♗a8 23 ♖cd1, or 22...♖a8 23 ♗xg7!, reducing the disadvantage to a minimum.

23 ♗xc8 ♗c6 24 ♗h3

24 ♗xa6 loses to 24...♕d5.

24...♕e8!

The e3-pawn falls and White's position crumbles. It is important to have the c6-bishop protected, in order to meet 25 ♖c3 by 25...♗b4, winning the exchange.

25 ♗g2

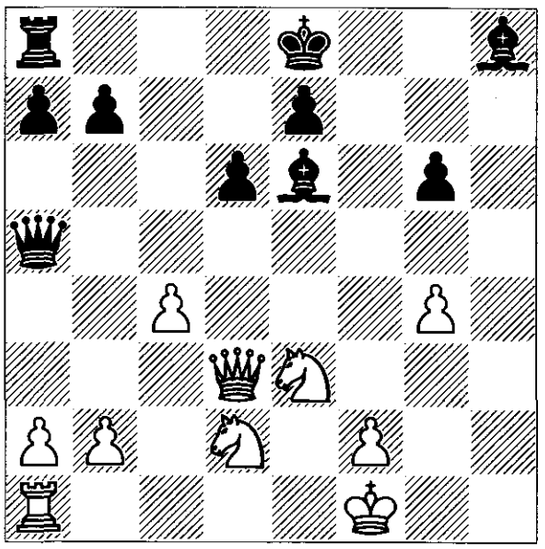
Black finishes off now with elegance, culminating with a queen manoeuvre that enables the rook to deliver the decisive blow.

25...♖xe3! 26 ♔h1 ♗xg2+ 27 ♔xg2 ♕e4+ 28 ♔h3 ♕e6+ 29 ♔g2 ♕d5+ 30 ♔h3 ♖e6! 0-1

Exercise 35

Reshevsky – Kavalek

USA Ch playoff, Chicago 1973



Two of the most important elements of the position are the unprotected pawns on g6 and b2. Black must also soon decide what to do with his king.

21...♗xb2?

This won't lead to the exchange of the b2-pawn for the one on g6, but to the disappearance of both b-pawns. After the position opens up, the black king will be worse off – it will become much more vulnerable than its white counterpart.

Black should play 21...♔d7!, stepping out of the check in advance, followed by 22...♖c8, and the black bishops hit the white queenside strongly while the black king is reasonably placed in the centre.

22 ♖b1 ♗e5

22...♕xa2? is not possible because after 23 ♕xg6+, the pin ♕c2 wins.

23 ♖xb7

Not, of course, 23 ♕xg6+? ♗f7, when the black king is not compromised.

23...♔f7 24 ♘f3 ♖h8

The strength of the rook on the seventh is already felt – if 24...♗f6, there follows 25 ♕xd6.

25 ♘g5+ ♔f6 26 ♘xe6

Since the knight cannot be taken due to 27 ♕xg6+, the black rook must keep checking non-stop.

26...♖h1+ 27 ♔g2 ♖h2+ 28 ♔f3 ♖h3+ 29 ♔e4!

The white king will be ideally placed in the centre because the queen exchange is unavoidable.

29...♔xe6 30 ♕d5+ ♕xd5+ 31 ♘xd5 ♔f7

Neither 31...♗f6? 32 ♘f4+ nor 31...♖h7 32 f4 ♗f6 33 g5 ♗a1 34 ♖xa7 is a good defence either – Black is paralysed, so the a2-pawn decides.

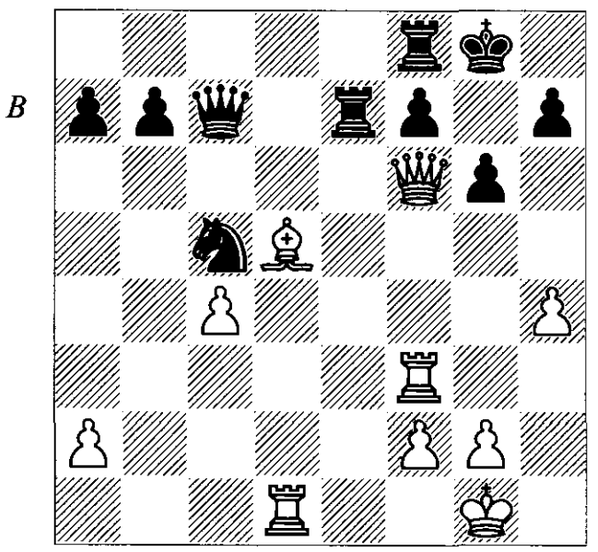
32 ♖xe7+ ♔f8 33 c5! ♖a3 34 c6 ♖a4+ 35 ♔f3 ♖c4 36 c7 ♗f6 37 ♖d7 1-0

There is no defence against 38 ♖d8+.

Exercise 36

Karpov – Smyslov

Moscow 1981



The safety of the black king is compromised. He must parry the threat of 26 h5, and if possible force the white queen from its dominant position.

25...♕e5? is not possible due to 26 ♗xf7+! ♖fxf7 27 ♖d8+, and mate.

25...♘e4?!

Driving away the queen for now, but it won't be a long-lasting solution. It is better to counterattack by 25...♖fe8!, threatening to win with 26...♖e1+. In this way Black repels White's attack. For instance, 26 g3 is met by 26...♘e4 27 ♕d4 ♕c5, while 26 ♖f4 ♖e1+ 27 ♔h2 ♖1e6! exploits the pin of the f4-rook, and repels the attack after 28 ♕d4 ♖e4! or 28 ♗xe6 ♘xe6, recovering the exchange. Lastly, Black can meet 26 ♕a1 by 26...h5 27 g3 ♔h7 28 ♔g2 f5, when he has solidified his king's position, with good prospects.

26 ♕d4

The threat of 27 h5 is still on. White threatens the e4-knight as well as the a7-pawn.

26...♘c5?

After this further mistake, giving White a free hand, there is no longer any defence.

Again it was best to play 26...♖fe8, with a defensible position after 27 ♖e3 (better than 27 h5 ♘g5 28 ♖g3 ♖e1+ 29 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 30 ♔h2 ♘e6 and then, for example, 31 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 32 h6 f5 33 ♕xa7 ♖e4, or 27 ♕xa7 ♘f6 28 g3 ♘xd5 29 cxd5 ♖e1+ 30 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 31 ♔h2 {or 31 ♔g2 ♕c4} 31...♕c1, with enough counterplay in both cases) 27...♘c5 28 h5 ♖xe3 29 fxe3.

27 h5! ♘d7

There is no time to defend the c5-knight. If 27...b6, then 28 h6 ♖e5 (the same follows after 28...♕e5) 29 ♗xf7+!, winning.

28 hxg6 hxg6 29 ♖g3 ♕e5

If 29...♕b6, then 30 c5! ♘xc5 31 ♖h3 wins, while 29...♘e5 is met by 30 f4.

30 ♖xg6+ ♔h7 31 ♖g3 ♘f6 32 ♕h4+ 1-0

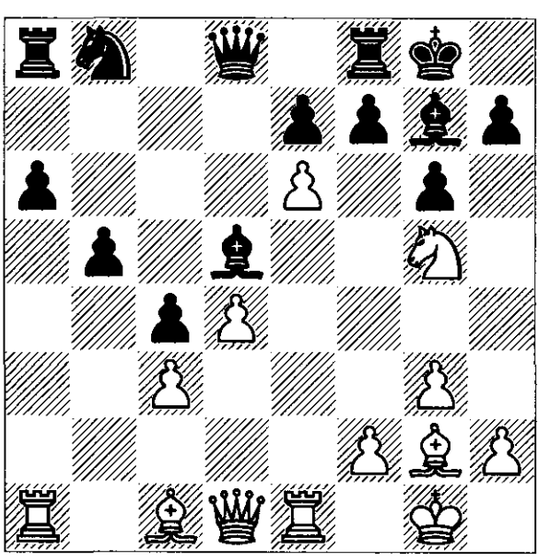
After 32...♕h5 (or 32...♘h5 33 ♖g5) 33 ♕xf6 ♕xd1+ 34 ♔h2, there is no defence.

Exercise 37

Lesiège – Kožul

Toronto 1990

B



White has given up a pawn in exchange for a lead in development. He has used it to create tension on the kingside, exploiting the fact that the a8-rook and b8-knight are still on their original squares.

There are three possible moves: taking on e6, or pushing the f-pawn either one or two squares.

15...f5?

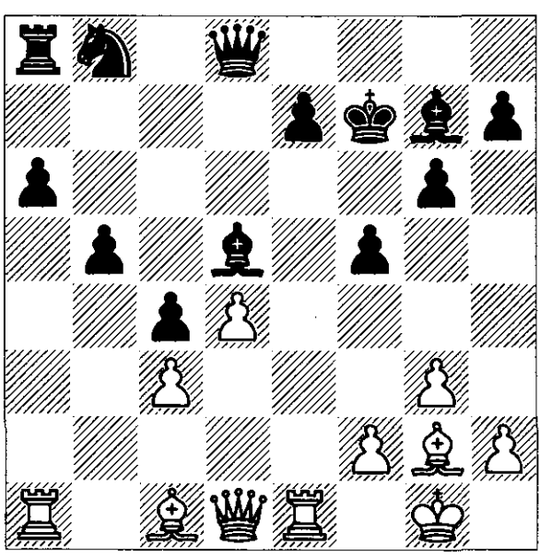
Too optimistic. Black doesn't see any specific reason for having to block his g7-bishop.

Opening the game by 15...fxe6? 16 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 17 ♖xe6 ♖a7 is not adequate. White increases his pressure with 18 ♕e2 followed by 19 ♗f4, 19 ♗g5 or even 19 h4.

It is best to keep the position as closed as possible with 15...f6!, not fearing 16 ♘f7 ♖xf7 17 exf7+ ♔xf7, with two pawns for the exchange and a pretty safe king.

16 ♘f7 ♖xf7 17 exf7+ ♔xf7 *(D)*

W



18 ♖xe7+!!

This beautiful rook sacrifice exploits the overloaded black queen and the opening of lines caused by 15...f5?.

18...♔xe7 19 ♗g5+

This check wouldn't exist had Black played 15...f6.

19...♗f6 20 ♕e2+ ♔f8

20...♔f7? fails to 21 ♗xf6 ♔xf6 22 ♕e5+.

21 ♗h6+ ♗g7

Against 21...♔f7 the winning line is 22 ♖e1 ♘c6 23 ♕e8+! ♕xe8 24 ♗xd5+.

22 ♕e5! ♗xh6 23 ♗xd5 ♗d2

Worse are 23...♖a7? 24 ♕h8+ ♔e7 25 ♖e1+, and 23...♘d7 24 ♕h8+ ♔e7 25 ♕xh7+ ♔d6 26 ♗xa8.

24 ♗xa8

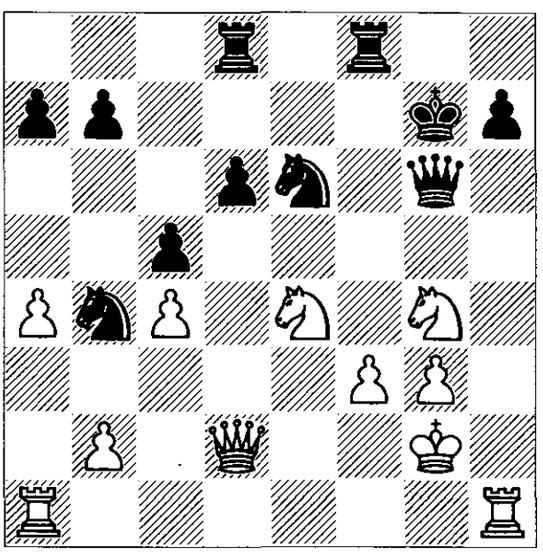
And White ended up converting his material advantage. 24 ♖a2! was quicker though, since

24...♗xc3? doesn't work, as White soon mates after 25 ♕h8+ ♔e7 26 ♖e2+. Other defences don't hold either; e.g., 24...♖a7 25 ♕h8+ ♔e7 26 ♕xh7+ ♔d6 27 ♕xa7, winning.

Exercise 38

Yusupov – Speelman

Linares 1991



Black's position is very promising. It seems possible to exploit the weakened situation of the white king – a timely ...♘d4 looks very strong.

However, the immediate 29...♘d4? is unsound, as there follows 30 ♖h6 ♕f5 31 ♖f1, indirectly defending the f3-pawn because of 32 ♕c3+, and the weakness of d6 is more important.

29...♖xf3?

This tempting move represents a failure to think prophylactically. It would be good if White were forced to take on f3 or didn't have any counterblows, but this is not the case.

The reason why 29...♘d4? fails gives us a clue as to why 29...h5!, preventing the entry on h6, is the strongest. Then 30 ♖xh5? ♕xh5 31 ♖h1 ♕g6 32 ♖h6 ♕f5 gives White nothing, whereas 30 ♖h4 provides a vital tempo for Black to seize the initiative with 30...♘d4, followed by ...♖de8. After the retreat 30 ♘gf2 there follows 30...d5! 31 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 32 ♕xb4, and only now the right idea at the right time: 32...♖xf3! 33 ♕xc5 (or 33 ♔xf3 ♖f8+ 34 ♔g2 ♖xf2+) 33...♕xg3+ 34 ♔f1 ♖df8, winning.

30 ♕h6+!

After the queen exchange it will be the black king who will fall under a demolishing attack. One line that didn't work was 30 ♔xf3? ♘d4+ 31 ♔g2 ♕xe4+ 32 ♔h3 ♕g6, followed by, for instance, 33...h5 and 34...♖f8, waiting for the best occasion for one of the black knights to become active. The bad situation of the white king provides good compensation for the exchange.

30...♕xh6 31 ♖xh6 ♘d4 32 ♖ah1 ♖h8 33 ♖xd6

Winning back the pawn and threatening 34 ♖xd4. This move also enables the rook to land on the seventh rank.

33...♘d3?

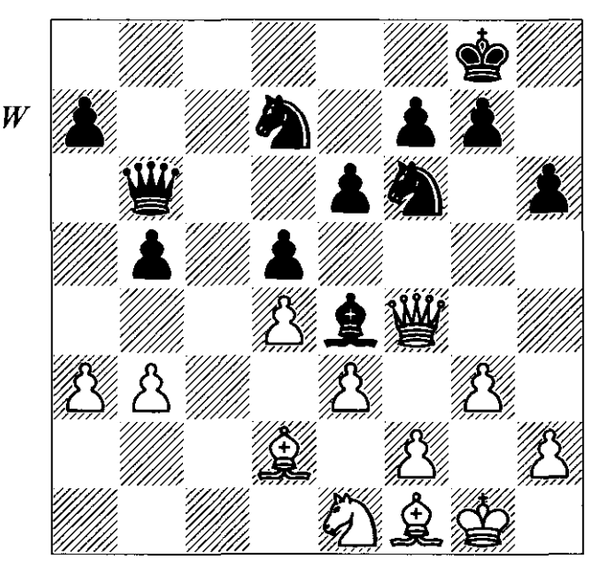
This doesn't prevent the main threat, although 33...♘bc6 34 ♖h5! is also awful for Black – the other rook penetrates with decisive effect; e.g., 34...♖f5 (or 34...♖b3 35 ♖d7+ ♔f8 36 ♘d6, threatening mate in two, with a winning attack) 35 ♖d7+, and 35...♖f7 is forced, so the queenside pawns fall, with greater activity for White, for 35...♔f8? loses to 36 ♘d6!.

34 ♖xd4 cxd4 35 ♔xf3 ♘xb2 36 ♖b1 ♖f8+ 37 ♔e2 ♘xc4 38 ♖xb7+ ♔g6 39 ♔d3 ♘e3 40 ♘xe3 dxe3 1-0

Exercise 39

Illescas – Karpov

Linares 1994



If we took only general considerations into account, there wouldn't be any doubts as to the fact that the best move would be to 'enlarge' the bishop and seize the dark squares, which have no defender.

26 ♗b4?

However, due to tactical motifs, such as the somewhat compromised position of the white queen on f4, it was better to play 26 g4! first, making g3 available to the queen.

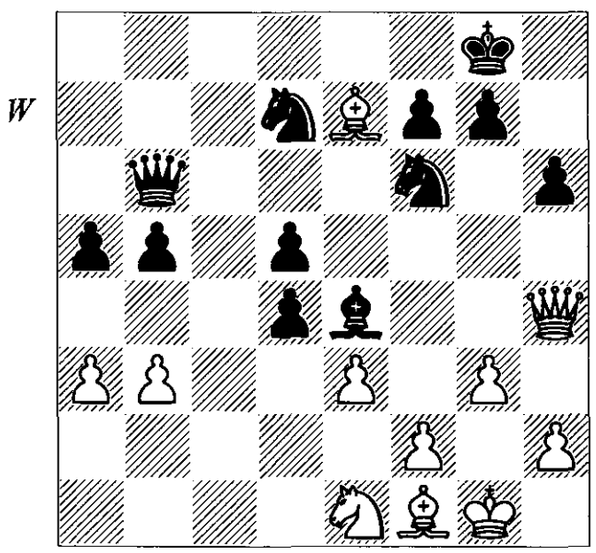
26...a5!

Better than the direct 26...e5 27 ♕h4 exd4 28 exd4 ♕xd4, which allows 29 ♗xb5.

27 ♗e7 e5! 28 ♕h4

Not, of course, 28 dxe5?? due to 28...g5, and the queen is trapped.

28...exd4 *(D)*



29 ♕f4

Now it's not the same after 29 exd4 ♕xd4 30 ♗xb5 because with 26...a5! the b4-bishop was removed from the defence. There would follow 30...♕d1 31 ♔f1 ♘e5, in order to play 32...♘f3, winning.

Inserting 29 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 30 exd4 ♕xd4 31 ♗xb5 is not a sufficient defence either. Now it is the a3-pawn that ends up unprotected, and falls after 31...♕a1! 32 ♔f1 ♕xa3.

29...dxe3 30 ♕xe3 d4 31 ♕f4 ♕c6

Better than 31...♗d5, allowing the regrouping 32 ♘c2! ♗xb3 33 ♘xd4.

32 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 33 ♕b8+ ♔h7 34 ♕xb5 ♕c1 35 ♘d3

As Karpov indicated, the simple 35...♕xa3 would have kept the extra pawn, with great advantage to Black. However, the game continued...

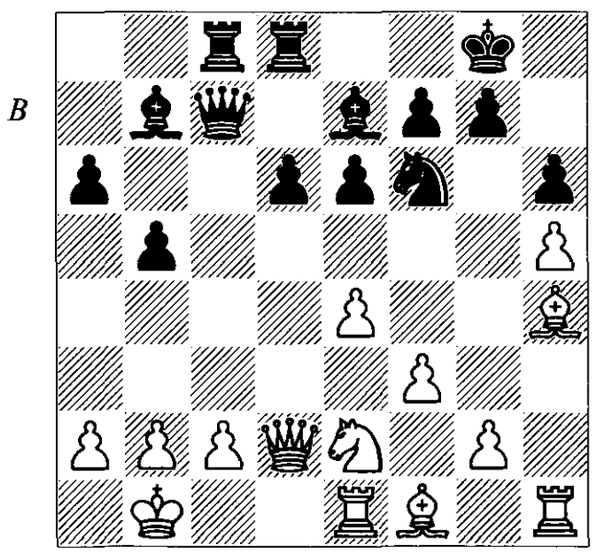
35...♕d1?! 36 ♘c5!

...which allowed White to hold on tenaciously, although not to save the game.

Exercise 40

Ivanchuk – Anand

Linares 1998



The break ...d5 is a basic element of Black's strategy in the Sicilian. When carried out in good circumstances, it leads to the activation of the black pieces. Black should be ready to make it at the right time. When is that time? As on so many occasions, it depends on the circumstances – basically on what the opponent can reply.

You will no doubt have wondered whether this is a good opportunity to make that move.

17...e5!

Restricting the e2-knight and ruling out White's e5 advance once and for all.

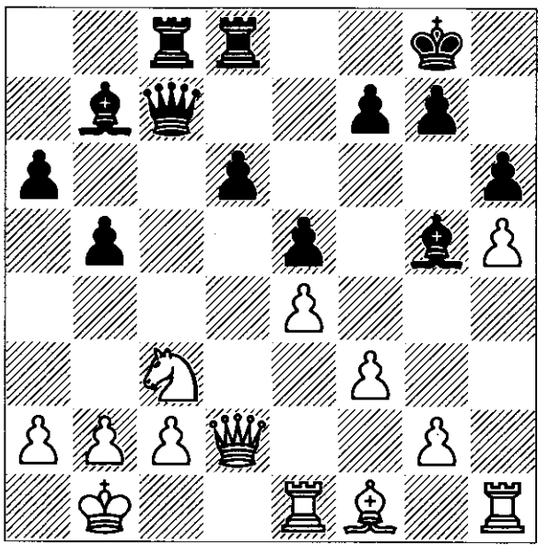
It was not the right time to play 17...d5?! for White replies 18 e5! ♕xe5 19 ♗g3 ♕f5 20 ♘d4 ♕h7 21 ♗d3 ♕h8, when despite the extra pawn Black has little to be proud of.

18 ♗xf6

If 18 ♘c3, then 18...d5! is strong: 19 exd5 (19 ♗xf6 is met by the *zwischenzug* 19...dxe4) 19...♘xd5, with a better position for Black. His pieces are all in play, whereas the h1-rook isn't as yet. According to Anand, the best move-order for White to neutralize Black's initiative is 18 ♘g3! d5 19 ♗d3 dxe4 20 fxe4 ♘h7 21 ♗xe7 ♕xe7, followed by 22...♘g5, with just a slight advantage for Black.

18...♗xf6 19 ♘c3 ♗g5! *(D)*

Before deciding whether to play ...♕a5, ...b4 or ...d5, Black forces White to reveal the destination of his queen.

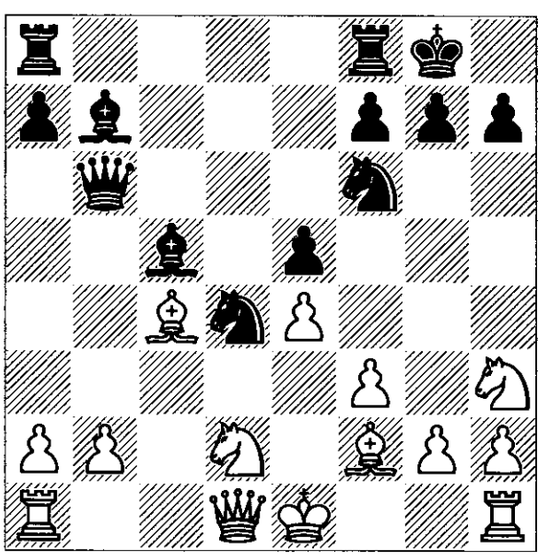


Where should the white queen now move? You can consider this as **'Exercise 40a'**. See page 235 for the solution.

Exercise 41

Yermolinsky – D. Gurevich

USA Ch, Seattle 2000



Black is a pawn down, but his pieces are well mobilized. However, White only needs to castle for him to view the future with optimism.

The pawn cannot be regained yet: 12...♕xb2? loses to 13 ♖b1, but it is possible to create problems for the white king.

12...♗c8!

The threat of weakening the king's position is very unpleasant and doesn't have a completely satisfactory answer.

13 ♘g5?!

There is no development to back up this activity. Despite everything, 13 0-0 was better, although after 13...♗xh3 14 gxh3 Black has a pleasant choice between 14...♘h5 and 14...♖ac8, delaying the capture of the b2-pawn, or even 14...♕xb2 at once.

13...h6! 14 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 15 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 16 ♘b3

It was too late for 16 0-0. Black would win more material with 16...♗a6 17 ♖e1 ♘c2, and White cannot hold with 16 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 17 ♕b3+ ♗e6 18 ♕xb6 axb6 either.

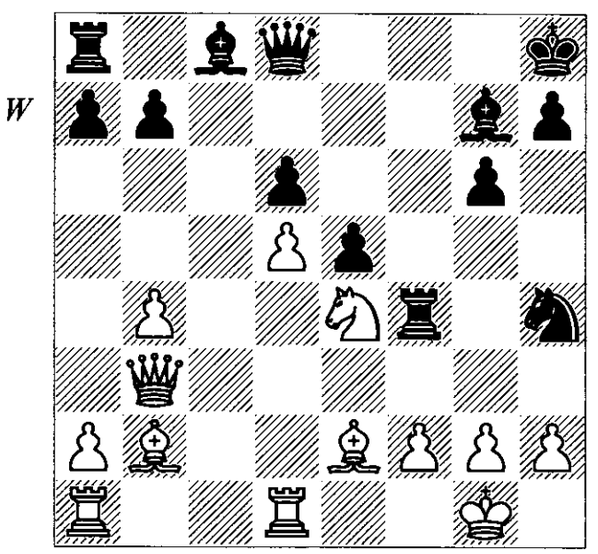
16...♕b4+ 0-1

After 17 ♔f1 ♕c4+ 18 ♔g1 ♘e2+ White loses more material, while 17 ♘d2 can be met by 17...♗a6, among other moves.

Exercise 42

Bacrot – Kasimdzhanov

Moscow (rapid) 2002



The e4-knight is threatened. It is clear that it must stay put on its dominant post. There are two possible defences, 20 f3, after which it would be more stable, or 20 ♕e3, exposing the queen to the attack 20...♘f5 – which is better?

20 f3?

The right answer can only be given by taking into account the aforementioned elements. Although the text-move might seem best, White also has to foresee what the opponent can do, and soon we realize that this apparently solid move is a mistake, since it opens a very important diagonal for the opponent.

Better was 20 ♕e3!, when after 20...♘f5 (or 20...♖f8 21 ♖ac1 ♘f5 22 ♕d3 ♗h6 23 ♖c2 ♕b6 24 a3) 21 ♕d3 ♘d4 22 ♗xd4 ♗f5 23 ♗f3

exd4 24 g3 ♗xe4 25 ♗xe4 ♖f7 26 ♖ac1 Kasimdzhanov points out that White has a slight edge.

20...♕b6+!

The safety of the white king will gradually worsen.

21 ♔h1 ♗f5

Putting more pressure on the kingside and preventing 22 g3?? due to 22...♖xe4!.

22 ♗d3

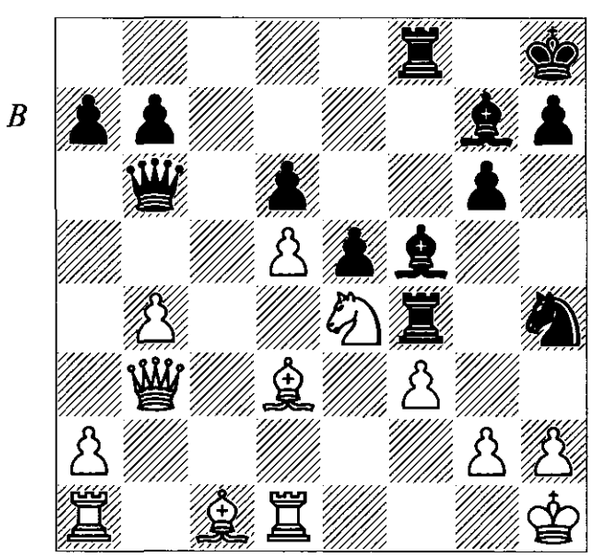
After 22 ♗c1 ♗xe4 23 ♗e3! ♗c2! 24 ♗xb6 ♗xb3 25 axb3 ♖xb4 (Kasimdzhanov) Black has the advantage.

22...♖f8

All the black pieces are acting on the kingside – it is very difficult to escape from such pressure unscathed.

23 ♗c1 *(D)*

Against the solid 23 ♖f1 Black adds yet another attacker with 23...g5!.



23...♘xg2! 24 ♔xg2

24 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 25 ♗f1 ♗h6! gives Black excellent compensation for the exchange due to the irreparable weakness of the white king, and Black's strong minor pieces, in particular the f4-knight which cannot be dislodged.

24...♖xf3! 25 ♕c4

The capture of the rook leads to a quick mate: 25 ♔xf3 ♗xe4++ 26 ♔g3 (26 ♔xe4 ♕d4#) 26...♕f2+.

25...♖xd3!

The third consecutive sacrifice, which virtually decides the game in a few moves.

26 ♖xd3

26 ♕xd3 is met by 26...♕xb4, controlling e1, when the e4-knight cannot be defended.

26...♖c8?

Black can win on the spot by 26...♗xe4+ 27 ♕xe4 ♕f2+ 28 ♔h3 ♖f5. The text-move still wins though. White will get two rooks for it, but the black queen will be much better and will keep capturing material.

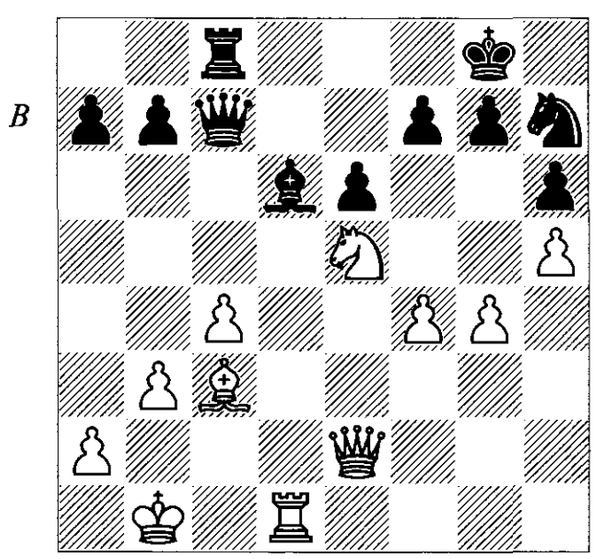
27 ♕xc8+ ♗xc8 28 ♗d2 ♗f5 29 ♖e1 ♕b5 30 ♖de3 ♕xd5 31 ♗c3 ♗h6 32 ♖3e2 ♕d3 33 ♗a1 ♗xe4+ 34 ♖xe4 ♔g8 35 ♗xe5 dxe5 36 ♖xe5 ♗f8 37 b5 ♗d6 38 ♖e8+ ♔f7 39 ♖8e4 ♕xb5 40 h4 ♕d5 41 ♖1e2 b5 42 ♔f1 b4 43 ♖4e3 ♕h1+ 44 ♔f2 ♗c5 0-1

Exercise 43

Almasi – Khenkin

Bundesliga 2003/4

The c3-bishop is unprotected – is this the time to make the most of this fact?



28...b5?

This will be emphatically refuted. Did you notice the unfortunate position of the knight? It was not possible to improve its position by 28...♘f6? due to 29 g5; the same continuation follows after 28...♘f8?.

28...♖d8! is better, forgetting any aggressive intentions, overprotecting the d6-bishop, and parrying 29 g5? due to 29...hxg5.

29 ♘xf7!

With this sacrifice the black king is exposed, exploiting the fact that the d6-bishop and the h7-knight had become tactical weaknesses.

29...♔xf7 30 ♕d3 ♘f8

Letting White's queen in is not best. After 30...bxc4 31 ♕xh7 cxb3 32 ♕xg7+ ♔e8 33 ♕g6+ ♔d7 (or 33...♕f7 34 ♖xd6 ♕xg6+ 35 hxg6 ♖xc3 36 ♖d8+! ♔xd8 37 g7) 34 axb3 ♕xc3 35 ♕f7+ ♔c6 36 ♖c1 White wins.

31 ♕xd6 bxc4 32 b4!

Instead, 32 ♕d4 cxb3 33 ♕xg7+ ♔e8 34 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 35 ♗f6 bxa2+ 36 ♔xa2 ♔f7 was less strong.

32...♕xd6 33 ♖xd6

White's advantage is clear: more active pieces and better structure.

33...♖c7 34 ♖a6 ♖b7?

This loses the vital a7-pawn. 34...♘d7 is better, although after 35 ♗d4 a very difficult defence awaits Black.

35 ♗d4! ♖xb4+ 36 ♔c2 ♖b7 37 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 38 ♗xa7

Material is level but White's passed pawn is very strong whereas the one on c4 is worthless. Furthermore the bishop is very superior to the knight and the weakness of the g7- and h6-pawns only adds to it.

38...e5 39 fxe5 ♔e6 40 ♗d4 ♔d5 41 ♗c3 g6 42 g5!

A nice tactical blow to create a new passed pawn.

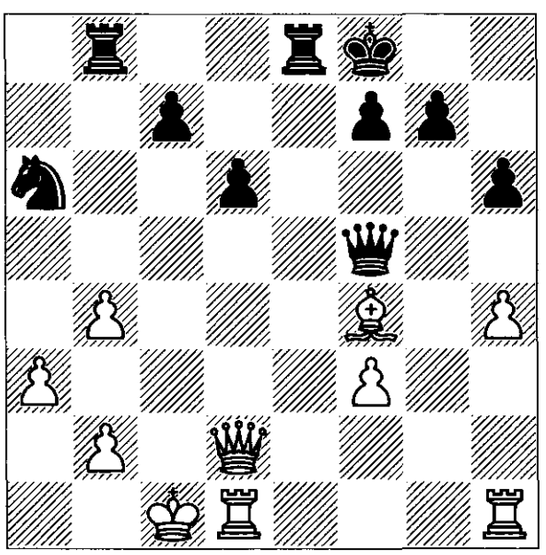
42...hxg5 43 h6 g4 44 ♔d2 ♘h7 45 ♔e3 ♘g5 46 ♔f4 g3 47 ♔xg3 ♘e4+ 48 ♔f3 ♘xc3 49 h7 1-0

Exercise 44

Rublevsky – Shirov

Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006

W



Basically there are three possibilities:

1) Win material with 24 ♗xd6+.

2) Attack via the half-open g-file with 24 ♖hg1.

3) Modestly challenge the open file with 24 ♖he1.

Were there no refutation, the two first options would be the more attractive ones. So are there any tactical refutations?

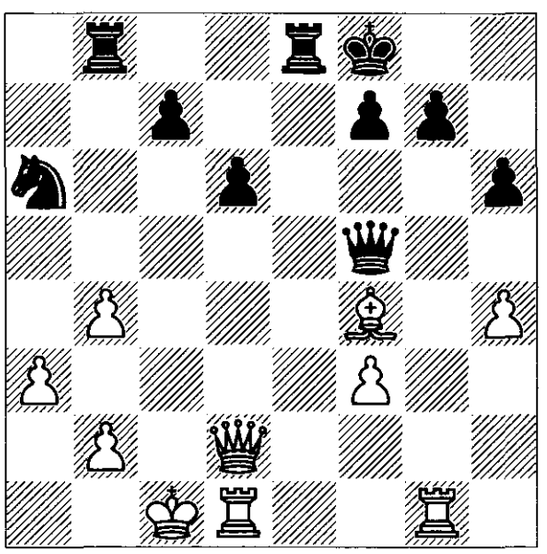
It soon becomes clear that the combination 24 ♗xd6+?? cxd6 25 ♕xd6+ ♔g8 26 ♕xa6 ♖bc8+ is unsound, for it leads to the white king being mated. So that leaves the last two moves...

24 ♖hg1? *(D)*

White gets overconfident, thinking Black has no threats.

The right move was 24 ♖he1!, when Black must perform a balancing act in order to bring the a6-knight into the fight. Of course since White is now able to exchange a rook, the continuation 24...♘xb4?? 25 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 26 axb4 ♖a8 is harmless due to 27 ♕d4, for instance.

B



24...♘xb4!

Black strikes first – he decisively opens the a-file before White's attack can even get started. The threat is 25...♘a2#.

25 axb4 ♖a8 26 b3

The white queen must protect the f4-bishop, and 26 ♕d4 ♖e2 doesn't work – it is mate in a few moves.

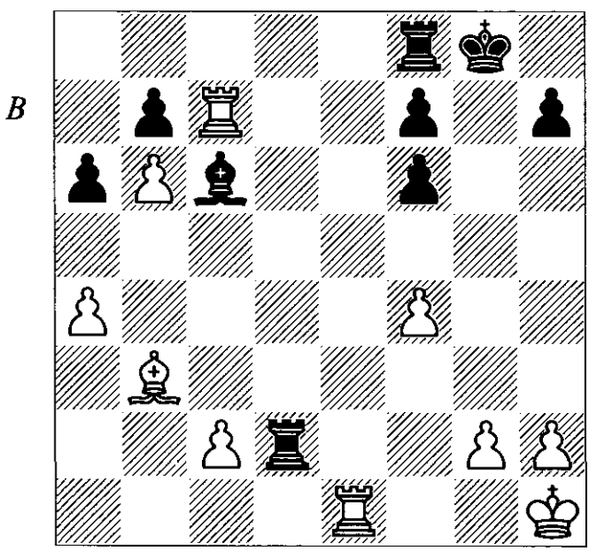
26...♖a1+ 27 ♔b2 ♕f6+ 0-1

Black wins the exchange after 28 ♕d4 ♕xd4+ 29 ♖xd4 ♖xg1.

Exercise 45

Grishchuk – Rublevsky

Candidates match (game 1), Elista 2007



Despite the limited material, there are many possibilities. Both kings are in an unpleasant situation, to which it has to be added White's possibility of giving up the exchange at the appropriate moment by ♖xc6, creating a passed pawn.

28...♖f2?

Short of time, Black does not find the best move. Since White has all his pieces in play, while Black is missing the f8-rook, there are several unsatisfactory lines in which that absence is felt. Let's see:

a) 28...♖xg2?? clearly loses to 29 ♖xc6.

b) It is not possible to try to activate the f8-rook right away with 28...♖fd8? 29 ♗xf7+ (Rublevsky also indicates 29 ♖xf7 ♔h8 30 ♖xf6 ♗xg2+ 31 ♔g1 ♗f3 32 h3, with a clear advantage to White; he is two pawns up) 29...♔h8 30 c4! (preparing a timely ♗d5; less convincing is 30 ♗h5, controlling d1, due to 30...♗xg2+ 31 ♔g1 ♗c6!; the tempting 31...♖g8? fails to 32 ♗f7 ♖gd8 33 c4! ♗f3 34 ♗d5 ♗xd5 35 cxd5 and White has escaped the pressure, after which the capture of the b7-pawn is decisive) 30...♖d1 31 ♖g1, followed by 32 h3, whereas 31...♖8d2? doesn't work due to 32 ♗d5!, winning.

c) 28...♗xg2+?! 29 ♔g1 ♗f3 30 ♖e3 ♗c6 31 ♖ee7 ♔h8 32 ♗xf7 is not sufficient either; e.g., 32...♖fd8 33 ♖xc6! bxc6 34 ♗b3 ♖2d7 35 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 36 a5 ♖d4 37 c3, and the white pawns decide; for instance, 37...♖d2 38 ♗c4 c5 39 ♗xa6 ♖b2 40 b7 ♔g7 41 ♗b5 ♖xb5 42 a6.

d) After these lines one could draw the conclusion that the piece that must escape from its confinement first is Black's king, so that later on he can activate the rook without the problem of having the king exposed. After 28...♔g7! Black obtains a somewhat inferior but fully playable position, as Rublevsky points out. Let's see: 29 h3 ♗xg2+ 30 ♔g1 ♔h6 31 ♖e3 (or 31 ♗xf7 ♖fd8!, breaking free from its confinement at long last) 31...♗c6 32 ♖d3 ♖g8+ 33 ♔f1 ♖h2 34 ♖xf7 ♖h1+ 35 ♔e2 ♖h2+ 36 ♔e3 ♖xh3+.

29 h3 ♖xf4 30 ♖ee7

The f4-pawn is a very low price to pay for having avoided the back-rank mate. White is now able to occupy the seventh rank.

30...♖f1+ 31 ♔h2 ♖f2 32 ♖xc6!

More elegant and stronger than 32 ♔g3 ♖xg2+ 33 ♔h4, which also wins.

32...bxc6 33 ♖xf7 ♖f4

After 33...♖xf7 34 b7 the pawn cannot be stopped.

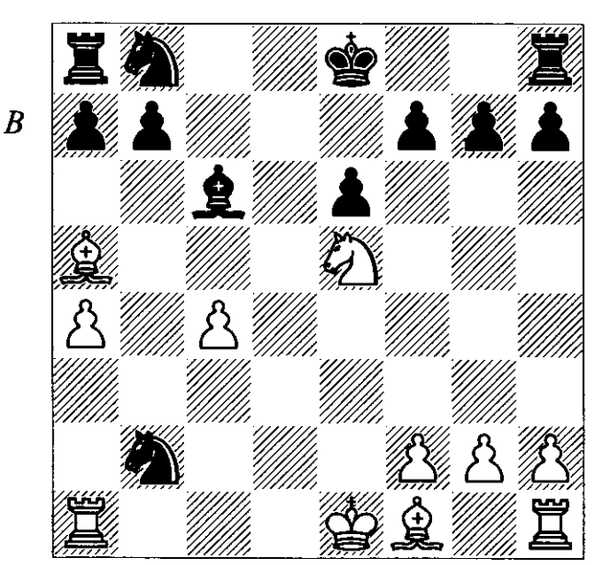
34 c3 ♖e4 35 ♖e7+ 1-0

Solutions for Chapters 6 and 7

Exercise 46

Marshall – Em. Lasker

Paris 1900



Black has an extra pawn, but the b2-knight is in a precarious situation. White's two main

threats are 17 ♖a2, and 17 ♘xc6 followed by 18 ♗c3.

16...♗e4?

Black won't be able to save the piece. As Marshall indicated, Black can reach a good position after 16...♘d7!, when the best line for both sides seems to be 17 ♘xc6 (after 17 ♘xd7 ♔xd7, the a4-pawn falls) 17...bxc6 18 ♗c3 ♖b8 19 ♗xg7 (not, of course, 19 ♖a2? due to 19...♘xc4!) 19...♖g8, followed by 20...♔e7, and Black has all his pieces in play.

17 ♗c3?

After 17 ♖a2! Black can't rescue his knight.

17...f6 18 f3!? ♗c2?

The *zwischenzug* 18...♗f5! appears to make no difference after 19 g4 ♗c2 20 ♔d2, but in fact Black then saves his piece by 20...♘d1 21 ♔xc2 ♘e3+ 22 ♔d3 ♘xf1, when the e5-knight is miraculously trapped mid-board!

19 ♔d2 ♘xa4 20 ♔xc2 ♘xc3 21 ♘d3 ♘d5 22 cxd5 exd5 23 ♘c5 b6 24 ♗b5+ ♔f7 25 ♘a4?

Here White missed the stronger 25 ♘b7!. The knight is very powerful in the heart of Black's position. It is important that the knight cannot be captured, though; for instance, 25...♖c8+ 26 ♔d2 ♖c7 fails to 27 ♘d8+ ♔e7 28 ♖he1+ and the knight is untouchable because of the mate.

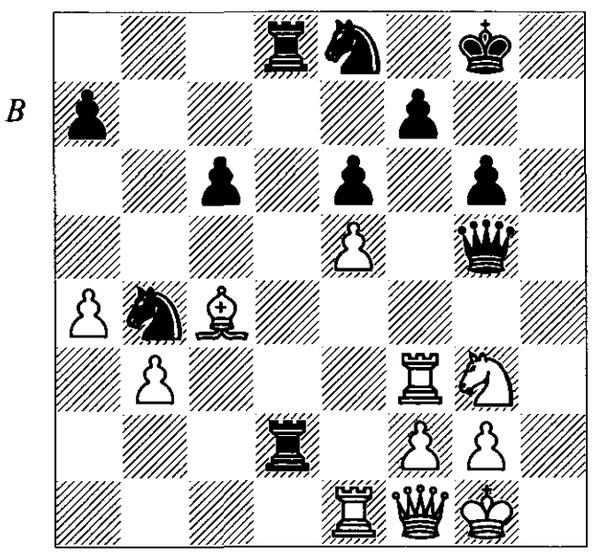
25...♘c6!

Black has thus improved his position, although eventually he was defeated.

Exercise 47

Euwe – Em. Lasker

Zurich 1934



With the exception of the e8-knight, the black pieces are much more active than White's. But right now Black needs to defend against the threat of 35 ♘e4 – how?

34...♘c2! 35 ♘e4 ♕xe5!!

...with the most active defence possible. This sacrifice of queen for rook, piece and a pawn resembles Lasker's in Game 4 against Ilyin-Zhenevsky.

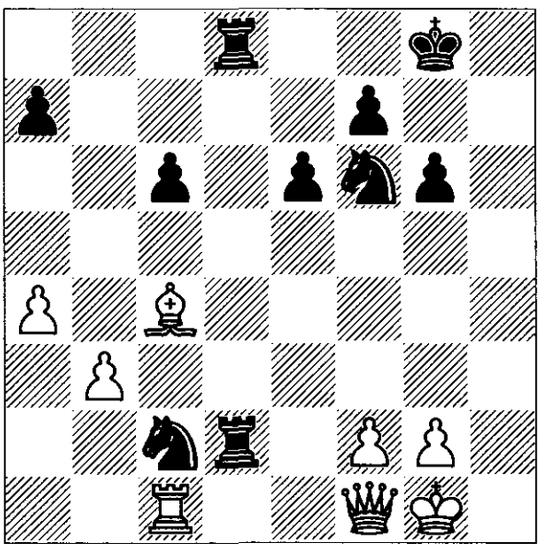
In this case the compensation lies in the dynamic superiority of the black pieces and the weakness of White's back rank.

36 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 37 ♖xf6 ♘xf6

This is good, but perhaps 37...♘xe1 is even better: 38 ♖xg6+ (or 38 ♗e2 ♘xf6 39 ♕xe1 ♘e4; or also 38 ♖f4 ♖d1 39 ♔h2 ♖8d2 40 ♗e2 ♘f3+ 41 ♖xf3 ♖xf1 42 ♗xf1 ♔g7 with an extra pawn) 38...fxg6 39 ♗xe6+ ♔g7 40 ♕c4 ♖8d6, with a decisive material advantage.

38 ♖c1 *(D)*

After 38 ♖e2 ♖d1 39 ♖xc2 ♖xf1+ 40 ♗xf1 ♖d6, the extra pawn should suffice to win in the long run.



38...♘e4 39 ♗e2 ♘d4 40 ♗f3 ♘xf2

40...♖d5! 41 ♗xe4 ♘e2+ 42 ♕xe2 ♖xe2 43 ♗xd5 cxd5 is also attractive, with a winning endgame.

41 ♕c4 ♘d3 42 ♖f1 ♘e5 43 ♕b4 ♘exf3+ 44 gxf3 ♘e2+

Another idea was to attack the white king with 44...♖d5!.

45 ♔h2 ♘f4+ 46 ♔h1 ♖2d4 47 ♕e7

No better is 47 ♕b7 ♔g7 48 ♕xc6 ♖8d5 (Kasparov).

47...♔g7!

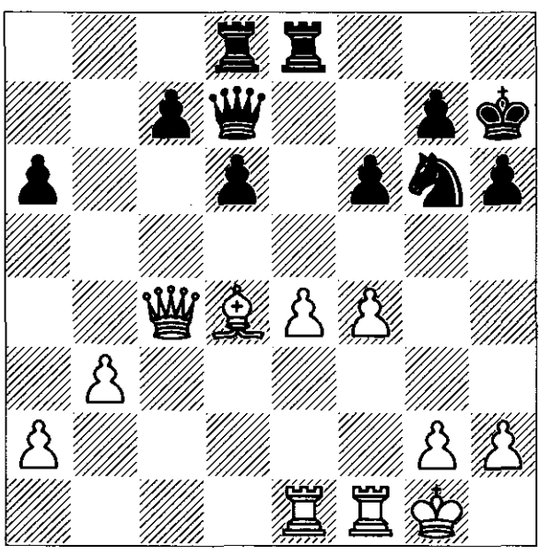
Clearing the way for a rook to join the attack along the h-file.

48 ♕c7 ♖8d5 49 ♖e1 ♖g5 50 ♕xc6 ♖d8! 0-1

Exercise 48

Euwe – Keres

World Ch, The Hague/Moscow 1948



Should Black remove White's central e4-pawn at the cost of allowing him a passed a-pawn?

28...♖xe4!

Euwe mistakenly considered this combination to favour him, for he got a strong passed a-pawn, supported by a powerful bishop.

29 ♖xe4 d5 30 ♕xa6 dxe4 31 ♗e3 ♕g4!

The reason why the exchange of pawns favours Black is that the white passed pawn will matter little during the next stage, whereas the black pieces can quickly attack the white king.

Tactics are of course important and Black's move is vital for the evaluation: it prevents the white queen from coming to the defence with 32 ♕e2, and threatens 32...♖d3 and 32...♘h4.

32 ♕c4

With 32 h3 ♕g3 33 ♕e2 the queen retreats, but after 33...♘h4 the threats are 34...♘f3+, 34...♘xg2 and 34...♖d3; for instance, 34 ♔h1 ♘xg2!, winning.

32...♖d3! 33 ♗c1

If 33 ♕xe4, then 33...♕e2! decides, whereas 33 ♖e1 is met by 33...f5, defending the e4-pawn with the idea of playing 34...♘h4 or 34...♘xf4.

33...♘h4!

33...f5! (Keres) is also strong.

34 ♕xe4+?! f5 35 ♕b7 c6

Time-trouble prevented Keres from finding the quickest finish: 35...♖c3! threatening 36...♖c2 and if 36 ♕d5 c6 37 ♕d2 ♖xc1!, Black wins.

36 ♕xc6 ♖c3 37 ♕d5 ♖c5!

Deflecting the queen. If it now moves to b7 (for instance), there follows 38...♖c2.

38 ♕d2 ♖xc1!

Black has obtained a winning position. In mutual time-trouble, some mistakes now followed, but without changing the result.

39 h3?

39 ♕f2 is more resilient.

39...♕g3?

39...♘f3+! is decisive at once.

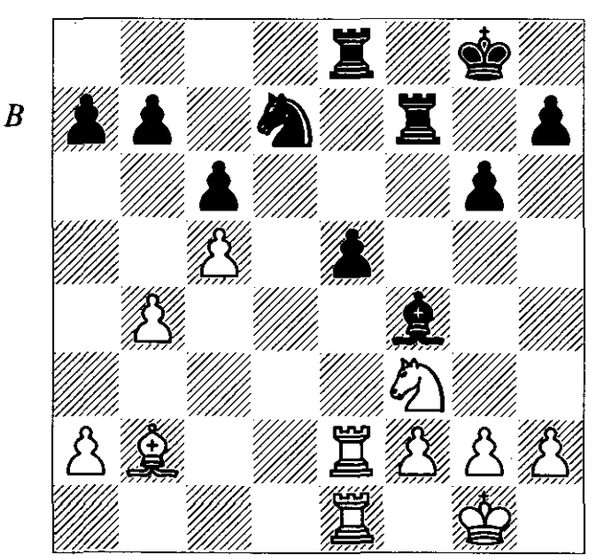
40 ♕e2 ♕xf4 41 ♖xc1 ♕xc1+ 42 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 43 ♔g1 ♘g6 44 ♕c2 ♘e7 45 a4 ♕d4+ 46 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 47 ♔g1 ♘d5 48 ♕d1 ♘c3 49 ♕c2 ♔g6 50 ♔h1 ♕e1+ 51 ♔h2 ♘e2 52 ♕c6+ ♔h7 53 ♕c5 ♘g3 54 ♕d6 ♘f1+ 55 ♔g1 h5 0-1

When playing 56 ♕f4 Euwe's flag fell, although there was no defence. Black would win with 56...♘e3+ 57 ♔h2 h4 and 58...♘f1+.

Exercise 49

Smyslov – Botvinnik

World Ch, The Hague/Moscow 1948



Black is in a critical situation: the e5-pawn is about to fall and there are no weakness in White's camp on which to base counterplay.

The first step is therefore to create a weakness in the opponent's camp. But how?

31...a5!

The objective is to generate a weakness on b4. It is unclear whether this is enough to save the game, but is something to hold on to – something that wasn't there before.

32 a3

White can emerge a pawn up after 32 bxa5 ♘xc5 33 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 34 ♗xe5 too, but the extra pawn isn't a conclusive advantage after 34...♖d7, followed by 35...♔f7.

32...axb4 33 axb4 ♖fe7 34 g3 ♗h6 35 ♘xe5

Not 35 ♗xe5? ♗g7, and White loses material.

35...♗g7 36 f4 ♘f6 37 ♔f2?!

Perhaps 37 h4 was more accurate, although there are still technical difficulties to convert the extra pawn after, for instance, 37...♘d5 38 ♖e4 ♖a8 39 ♔f2 ♖a2 40 ♖1e2 ♖a4.

37...♘d5 38 ♖e4

No better is 38 ♗a3 ♘c3! 39 ♖c2 ♘d5.

38...♘f6 39 ♖4e3

39 ♖d4 is met by 39...♘g4+, regaining the pawn.

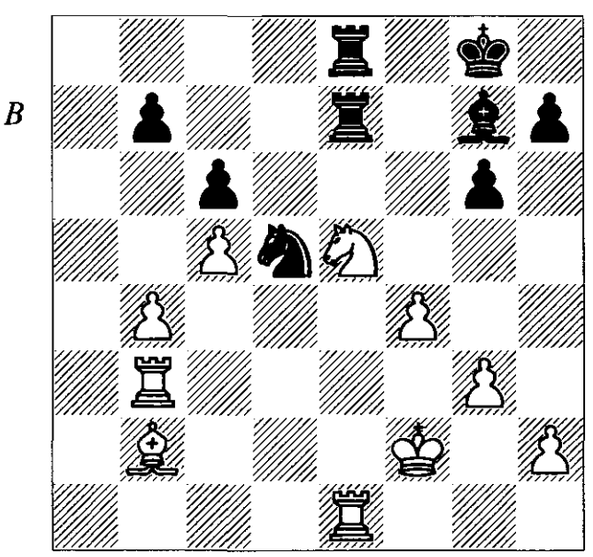
39...♘d5 40 ♖b3

And thus we reach Exercise 50...

Exercise 50

Smyslov – Botvinnik

World Ch, The Hague/Moscow 1948



The same reasoning and a similar solution to Exercise 49 are valid for this position. How should Black create weaknesses in White's camp?

40...g5!!

To the weakness of b4 is added now the one of f4 – this means it is already two fronts for White to defend, and his pieces are not well coordinated yet.

41 ♔f3

This was the sealed move. Analysis showed that Black's counterattack was sufficient to achieve a draw.

41...♖f8 42 ♖e4 ♘f6!

Also possible was 42...gxf4 (Golombek) with a balanced endgame after 43 gxf4 ♘xf4 44 ♖xf4 ♗xe5 45 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 46 ♖d3 ♖e7.

43 ♖e2

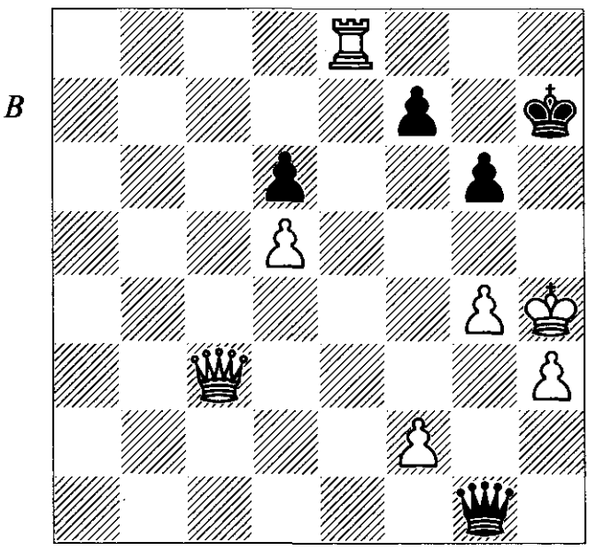
After 43 ♖c4 ♘d5 Black would threaten to capture twice on e5, and after, for instance, 44 ♔g4 gxf4 45 gxf4 ♗h6 46 ♗c1 ♗xf4 he would reach equality.

43...♘d5 44 ♖e4 ♘f6 ½-½

Exercise 51

Najdorf – Kurtić

Mar del Plata (open) 1984



Black seems to be lost – he is a rook down and threatened by mate but there is a saving resource, based on the positions of both kings.

1...♕xf2+ 2 ♔g5

Not, of course, 2 ♕g3?? due to 2...g5+.

2...f6+!!

A brilliant defensive resource, more typical of an artistic composition. Black manages to create a stalemate.

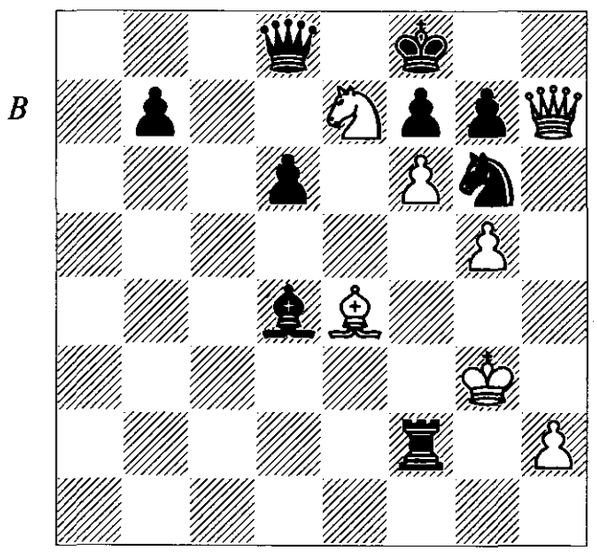
3 ♕xf6 ♕h4+! ½-½

After 4 ♔xh4 g5+! none of White's four legal moves avoids the stalemate.

Exercise 52

Kasparov – Korchnoi

Brussels 1986



Black is a whole rook and a pawn up, but as we saw in the last chapter, sometimes having several attractive options is a practical disadvantage. Here the extra rook leads Black to believe there are more good moves than there really are.

In fact, Black's choice is between a clearly decisive move, another one that should be good enough to win, and several wrong paths.

36...♗xf6?

This only leads to a draw.

36...♘xe7?? loses: 37 ♕h8+ ♘g8 38 ♕xg7+ ♔e8 39 ♕xg8+ ♔d7 40 ♕xf7+ followed by mate.

The counterattack 36...♗e5+ 37 ♔xf2 ♕b6+ 38 ♔g2 ♕b2+ 39 ♔f3 ♕b3+ is enough to win – White must allow another black piece to enter the attack with check, and the victory is obtained by always delivering check.

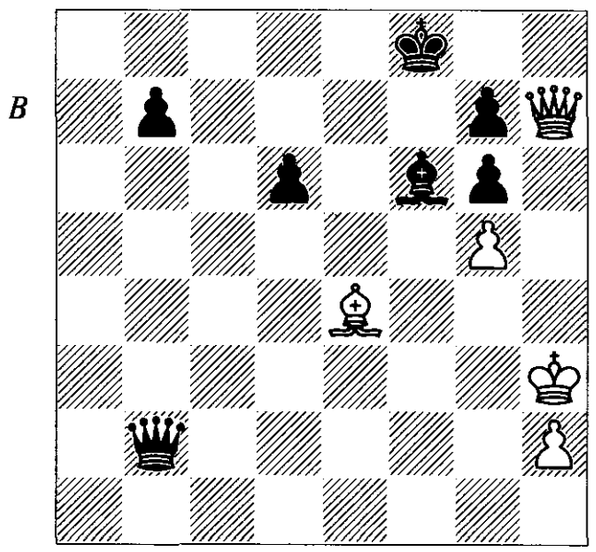
The clearest finish is achieved by 36...gxf6! 37 ♗xg6 (or 37 ♘xg6+ fxg6 38 ♗d5 ♕e8, winning easily) 37...♕e8! (37...fxg6 38 ♘xg6+ ♔e8 also works) 38 gxf6 ♖xf6.

37 ♘xg6+ fxg6 38 ♔xf2?

White should play 38 ♕h8+! ♔e7 39 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 40 ♔xf2 ♗d4+ 41 ♔f3 b5 42 ♗xg6, with a drawn endgame: White's king and bishop can stop Black's two passed pawns since they are not sufficiently advanced. It would be enough to keep the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal (or the b1-h7 one) counting on the help of the king, after exchanging the two white pawns for the one on g7 by h4-h5-h6.

38...♕b6+ 39 ♔g2 ♕b2+ 40 ♔h3? *(D)*

The wrong square! 40 ♔f3 is far more resilient.



40...♗xg5?

40...♗e5! gives Black unstoppable mating threats against the white king.

41 ♕xg6 ♕f6?

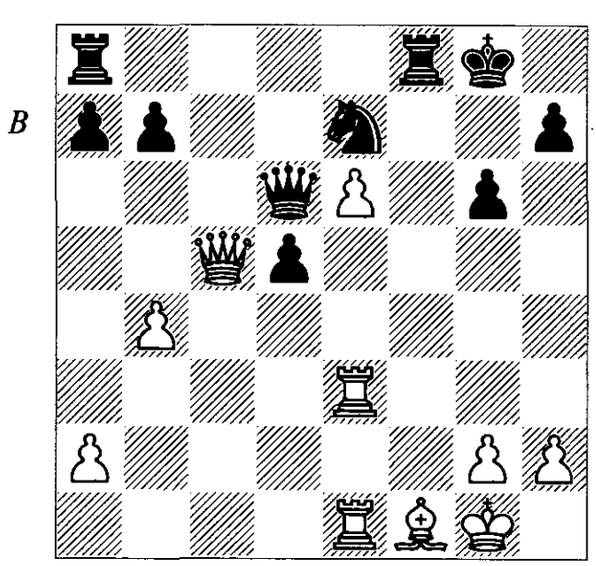
The last error; there was still some fight left in the position after 41...♗f6. Now Black's two passed pawns are not enough to win.

42 ♕xf6+ ½-½

Exercise 53

Kramnik – Shirov

Tilburg 1997



Black must decide whether it is in his interest to simplify, and if so, whether to exchange

on c5 or defend the queen, waiting for White to take.

One of the questions that arises is whether the passed pawn on e6 is stronger in the middlegame or in the endgame. In order to determine this, it is necessary to calculate accurately, especially if Black decides not to exchange queens.

What is your verdict? Simplification or counterattack?

23...♕f4?

Black opts for counterattack, with a threat of mate in two moves. Possibly Shirov didn't want to play an endgame without any chance of winning, but objectively it was the best the position had to offer.

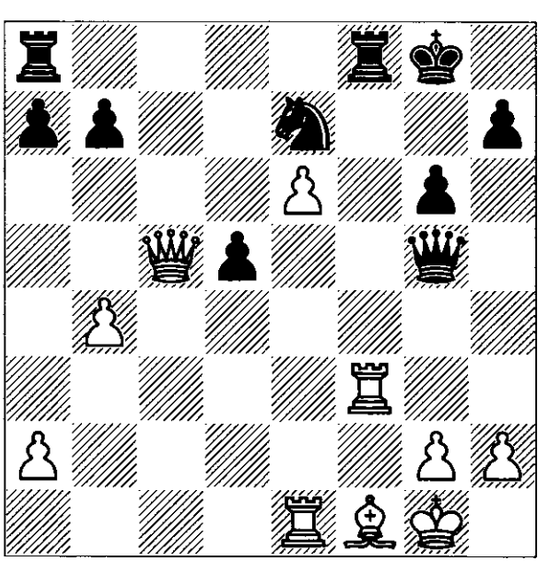
The exchange 23...♕xc5 seems the safest; for example, 24 bxc5 b6!? (Kramnik also suggests 24...♖fc8 25 ♖b1 ♖ab8 26 ♖eb3 ♖c7) 25 cxb6 axb6 26 a3 ♖f4 27 ♖b3 ♖fa4 28 ♖ee3 ♔g7, with a fully playable ending.

Defending the queen is somewhat less precise. After 23...♖ad8 24 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 White can control the open file with 25 ♖c1, and in the event of 25...♖c6?! 26 ♖xc6 bxc6 27 ♖a3, with the appearance of passed pawns, the bishop is generally superior.

24 ♖f3 ♕g5 *(D)*

Or 24...♕h4 25 g3, reaching a situation similar to the one in the game.

W



25 ♖f7!

The e6-pawn is decidedly stronger with the queens on the board. It can be sacrificed to open lines against the black king, which ends up very exposed. 25 ♖xf8+? ♖xf8 26 ♕xa7 ♕d2 27 ♕e3 ♕xb4, with equality, would be a mistake.

25...♖xf7

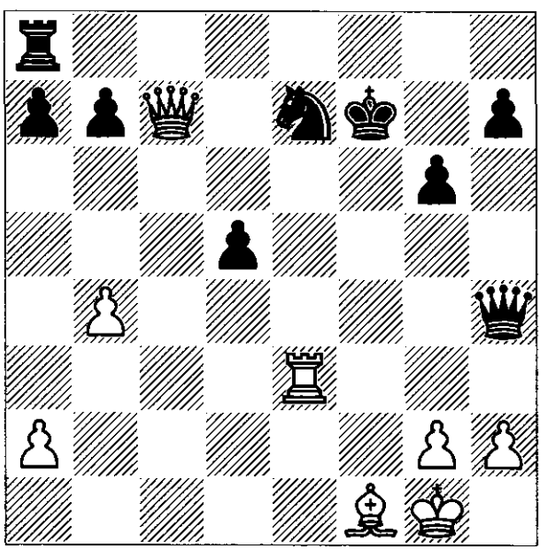
Not 25...♖ae8? because of 26 ♗b5.

26 exf7+ ♔xf7 27 ♕c7!

"Critical tactical play now commences" (Kramnik). Black has serious problems due to the pin of the e7-knight and the weak queenside pawns. White will try to increase the activity of the rook and the bishop.

27...♕h4 28 ♖e3! *(D)*

B



"The black king begins to feel uncomfortable." (Kramnik).

28...♕xb4?!

There wasn't time for 28...b6 due to 29 ♕e5 threatening 30 ♖h3, to which there is no good defence: 29...♕xb4 30 ♕e6+ ♔f8 31 ♕f6+ is winning for White.

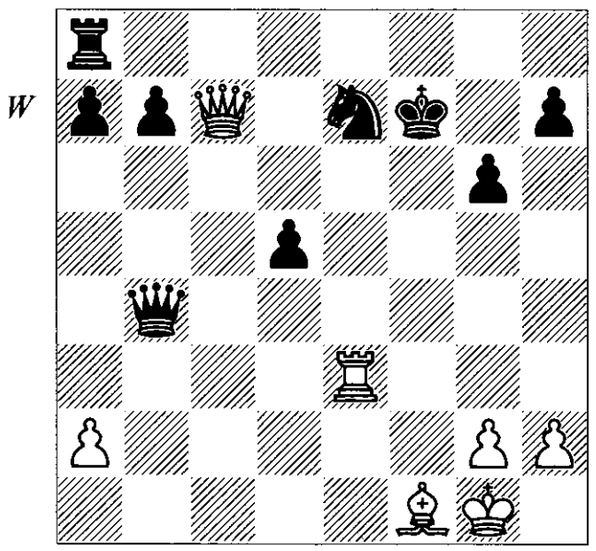
28...♖f8! is more resilient. 29 g3 ♕f6 (or 29...♕g5?! 30 ♖e2!, when "it is extremely hard for him to break the pin, his queenside pawns are hanging, and 31 h4 is threatened" – Kramnik; indeed White's advantage is probably decisive) and then:

a) After 30 ♗d3 ♖c8 31 ♕xb7 ♕d6 32 ♕xa7 ♕xb4 33 ♕d7 ♔f8 34 ♔g2!? the king hides on h3 and then White switches to the attack, being able to use the a-pawn as a distraction.

b) The continuation suggested by Kramnik was 30 ♗e2, threatening 31 ♖f3. There can follow 30...♖c8 (not 30...♔g8? 31 ♕xe7 ♕f2+ 32 ♔h1 ♕e1+ 33 ♔g2 ♕f2+ 34 ♔h3 and White ends up with an extra piece without compensation) 31 ♕xb7 ♕d6 32 ♕xa7 ♕xb4 33 ♕d7

♔f8 34 ♕e6 and White has the advantage. Kramnik's evaluation of a previous line (after 29...♕g5?! 30 ♖e2!) is valid for many similar positions.

We now return to 28...♕xb4?! *(D)*:

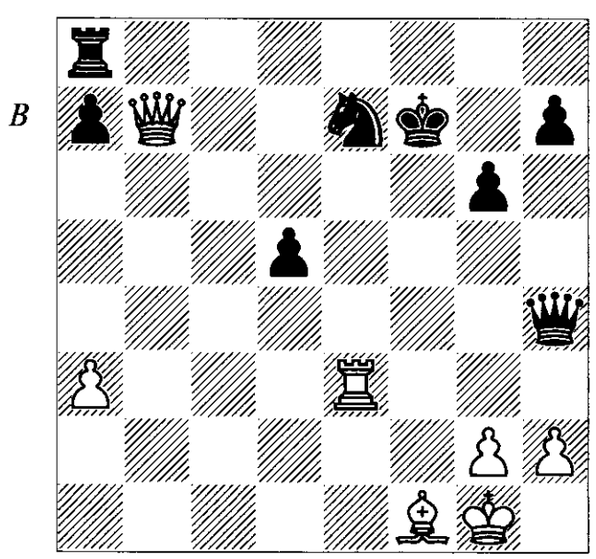


29 a3!

Now the queen must defend the e7-knight and abandon the b7-pawn; here we can see another reason why 28 ♖e3! was important: otherwise there would follow 29...♕b6+.

The attempt at a direct attack by 29 ♕d7? is insufficient: 29...♔f8! 30 ♖f3+ ♘f5 31 ♕xh7 ♕d4+ 32 ♔h1 ♕g7.

29...♕h4 30 ♕xb7 *(D)*



30...♖e8

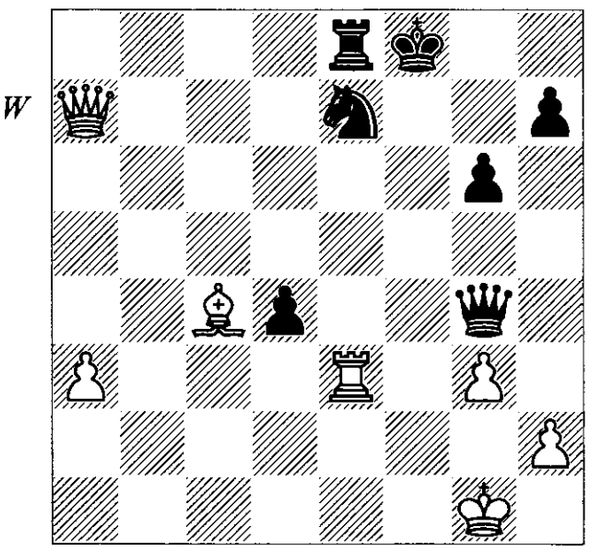
It is impossible to counterattack with 30...♖f8 31 ♕xa7 ♔g8?, for after 32 ♖xe7 d4 33 ♗c4+ ♔h8 34 g3, it is White who delivers mate.

31 ♕xa7 d4?!

This opening of the diagonal for the bishop is the result of Black's time-trouble, although it is not easy to suggest a defence in any case.

32 ♗c4+ ♔f8 33 g3! ♕g4 *(D)*

Against 33...♕f6, White plays 34 ♖e6 ♕g7 and, among others, 35 ♕b6 winning.



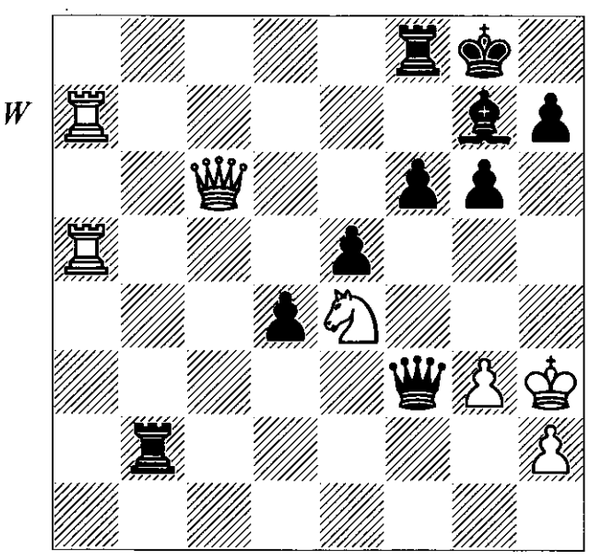
34 ♗e2 ♕c8 35 ♕xd4 ♕c1+ 36 ♔g2 1-0

White has an extra pawn, and most importantly, Black is paralysed; e.g., 36...♕c6+ 37 ♗f3 ♕c2+ 38 ♖e2 ♕b3 39 ♗c6 ♖b8 40 ♕f6+ ♕f7 41 ♕d6, with a double threat.

Exercise 54

Campora – Zhou Weiqi

Seville (open) 2003

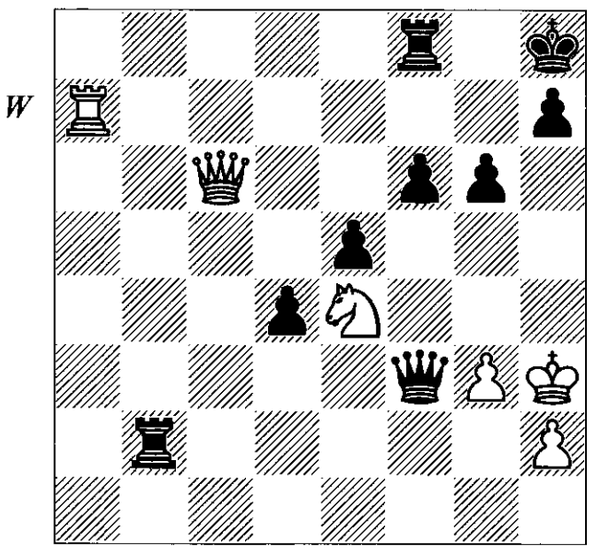


Black is three pawns up, and the white king is in a mating-net, so the outcome seems clear. However, there is a hidden resource which should have saved White.

42 ♖xg7+!

White finds the first move.

42...♔xg7 43 ♖a7+ ♔h8 *(D)*



But here White didn't find the saving move and resigned instead.

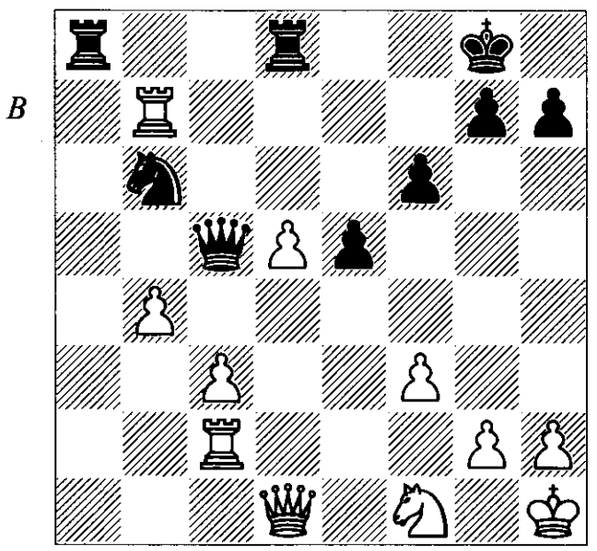
0-1??

He had at his disposal 44 ♖xh7+!! ♔xh7 (if 44...♔g8, then 45 ♕e6+! boils down to the same thing) 45 ♘g5+! fxg5 46 ♕xg6+! and the white king, thanks to the mating-net, will be stalemated.

Exercise 55

Ivanchuk – Bologan

Barcelona 2006



Black is temporarily two pawns down, although one will fall almost certainly. What is the best moment, and the best way, to simplify?

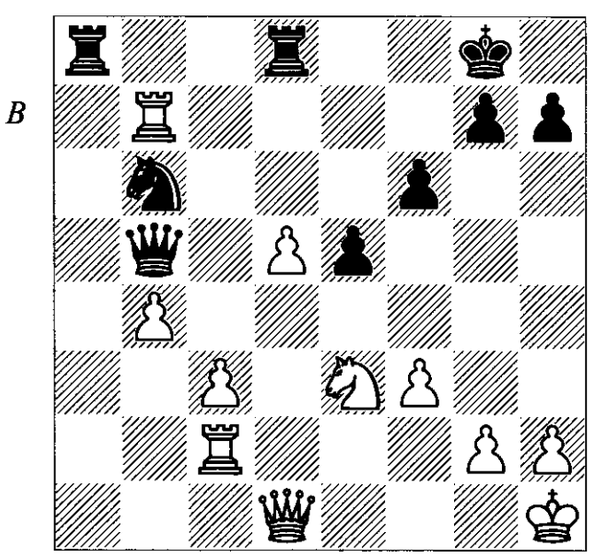
34...♕b5?

This allows White to consolidate his powerful structure. 34...♕xd5? is also inadequate since after 35 ♖d2 ♕xb7 36 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 37 ♕xd8+ ♔f7 38 ♘g3 White has his two passed pawns unharmed, is a pawn up, and has no problems.

The right move was 34...♖xd5! 35 ♖d2 (after 35 bxc5 ♖xd1 36 ♔g1 ♘c4 it is White who must seek a draw with 37 c6 ♖aa1 38 ♖f2 ♘e3 39 h3 ♘xf1 40 c7 ♘e3+ 41 ♔h2 ♖h1+ 42 ♔g3 ♘f5+ 43 ♔g4 ♘e7) 35...♖xd2 36 ♕xd2 ♕d5! (not 36...♕c6? 37 ♖xb6!) 37 ♕xd5+ (37 ♖xb6? loses to 37...♕xd2 38 ♖b8+ ♖xb8 39 ♘xd2 ♖d8) 37...♘xd5 38 ♔g1 ♘xc3, with a balanced endgame.

35 ♘e3?! *(D)*

Better was 35 c4! ♕a6 (35...♕c6 36 dxc6 ♖xd1 doesn't defend because 37 g4! ♖xf1+ 38 ♔g2 is decisive) 36 ♖c7 ♕a3 37 d6 ♖ac8 38 ♖xc8 ♘xc8 39 c5 ♕xb4 40 ♘e3, and the two passed pawns win.



35...♕a6 36 ♖c7 ♘xd5!

Black exploits the weakness of White's back rank to make a comeback in the game.

37 ♘xd5

37 ♖d2 ♕a1 38 ♘xd5 ♕xd1+ 39 ♖xd1 transposes to the game.

37...♕d3! 38 ♖c1 ♕xd1+ 39 ♖xd1 ♖xd5 40 ♖g1

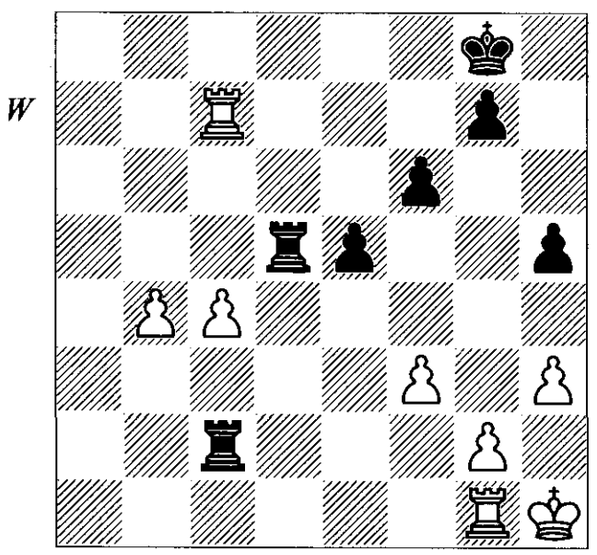
White has two passed pawns and is a pawn up, so Black's attempts to draw are not simple. The fact that the g1-rook is passive helps him momentarily.

40...♖a2 41 c4 ♖c2 42 h3

Making *luft* is an essential precaution.

42...h5 *(D)*

Against 42...♖d4 the passive g1-rook can become active – White notably improves his position after 43 ♖a1! h5 44 ♖aa7.



43 ♖xg7+!

Playing virtually with an extra rook allows Black to stop the pawns after 43 c5? ♔h7 44 ♖b7 f5 45 ♔h2 h4 (Ivanchuk).

43...♔xg7 44 cxd5 ♖b2

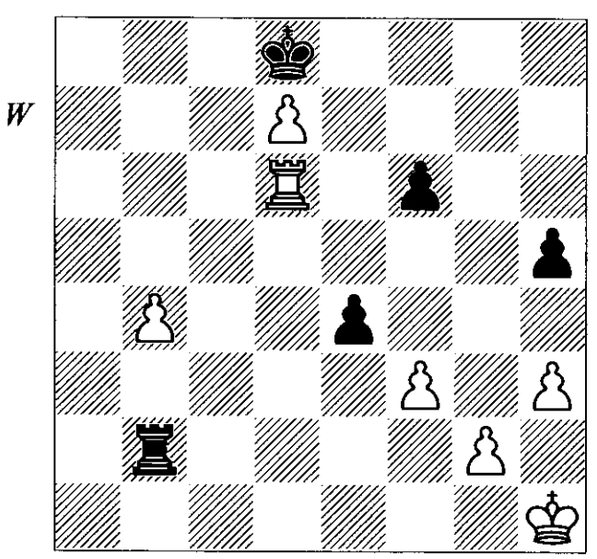
44...♖d2?! is worse, as 45 ♖b1! obtains the ideal position for the rook, behind the passed pawn.

45 ♖d1 ♔f7

The black king is in time to stop the passed pawn but must abandon the kingside.

46 d6 ♔e8 47 d7+ ♔d8 48 ♖d6 e4 *(D)*

48...♖xb4 49 ♖xf6 ♔xd7 50 ♖f5 is insufficient for Black, whereas 48...f5 49 ♖d5 ♖xb4 50 ♖xe5 ♖f4 51 ♖d5 h4 loses to zugzwang after, for instance, 52 ♔g1.



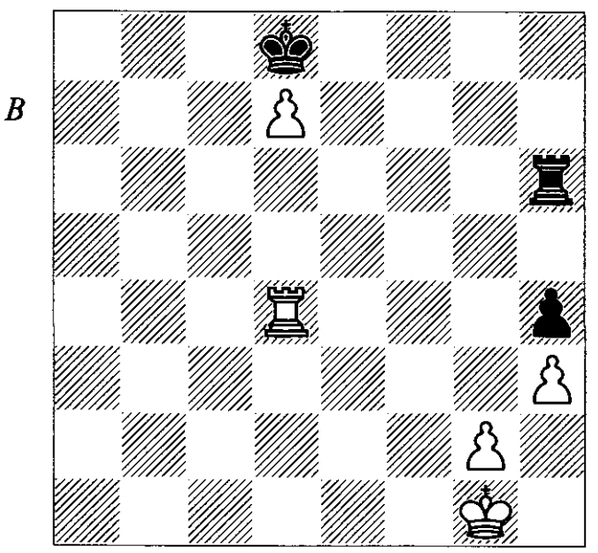
49 fxe4 ♖xb4 50 ♖xf6 ♖xe4 51 ♖d6 h4 52 ♔h2 ♖f4

52...♖e2 53 ♖d4 leaves White two pawns up.

53 ♖g6 ♖f7

Or 53...♔xd7 54 ♖g4.

54 ♖g4 ♖h7 55 ♖d4 ♖h6 56 ♔g1 *(D)*



With the entry of the king, resistance is over.

56...♖h7 57 ♔f2 ♖f7+ 58 ♔e3 ♖e7+ 59 ♔f3 ♖f7+ 60 ♔g4 ♖h7

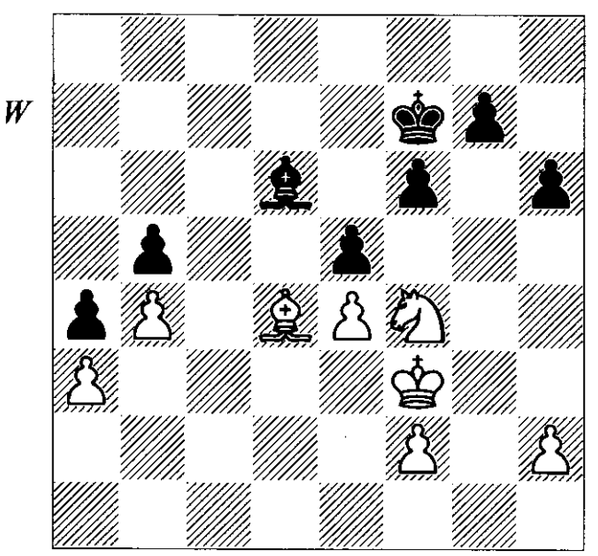
60...♖g7+ 61 ♔xh4 ♖xg2 62 ♔h5 ♖g3 63 h4 doesn't give Black survival chances.

61 ♖d2 ♖h8 62 ♔g5 ♖h7 63 ♖a2 1-0

Exercise 56

Kamsky – Sashikiran

Sofia 2007



White must decide which to play: a bishop endgame or one with knight against bishop. In order to make this decision it is necessary to

evaluate correctly how the queenside pawn-structure influences the game. There is a black weakness on b5 and a white one on a3.

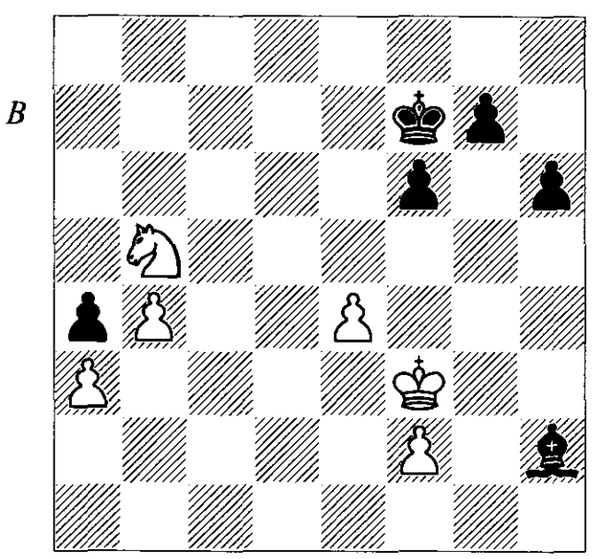
36 ♘e2??

"A horrible blunder in time-trouble. The knight will be no match for the bishop in the forthcoming ending because of the weakness on a3 and the outside passed h-pawn." (Sashikiran).

Best was 36 ♗c5! ♗xc5 37 ♘d5 ♗d4 38 ♘c7 ♗b2 39 ♘xb5 ♔e6 40 ♔e2 ♔d7 41 ♔d3 ♔c6 42 ♔c4 (42 ♔c2 ♔xb5 43 ♔xb2 ♔c4 is a draw too; Black's king controls the passed pawn on b4, but he cannot move away to support his majority on the other flank) 42...g6 43 ♘c3 ♗xa3 44 b5+ ♔d6 45 ♘xa4 f5, when we can forecast a draw.

Instead, after 36 ♗e3?! exf4 37 ♗xf4 thanks to the weakness on a3 there could follow 37...♗e7! "with a pleasant position to play on." (Sashikiran).

36...exd4 37 ♘xd4 ♗xh2 38 ♘xb5 *(D)*



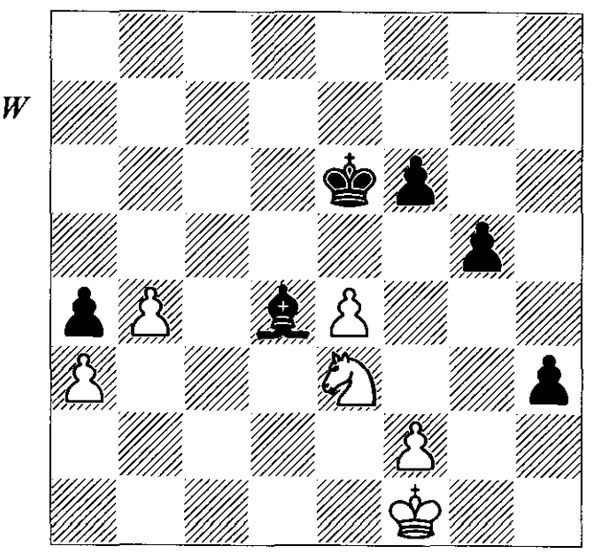
38...♗e5

The e5-bishop restricts the b5-knight and supports the advance of the passed pawn created on the kingside, besides being able to capture the a3-pawn at the right time. In order for the b5-knight to come back into the game, White must support it with his king, which favours the advance of the black passed pawn.

39 ♔e3

After 39 ♔g4 g5 40 ♔f5 ♔e7 41 ♘a7 ♔d7 42 b5 ♔c7 Black controls the white passed pawn and keeps all his advantages: the possibility of pushing his passed pawn with ...h5, and the weakness on a3, which could provide him with another passed pawn.

39...g5 40 ♘d4 h5! 41 ♘f5 h4 42 ♔e2 ♔e6 43 ♘e3 h3 44 ♔f1 ♗d4! *(D)*



45 ♔g1

No better is 45 ♘c4 g4 46 b5 ♔d7 47 ♘a5 ♔d6, winning.

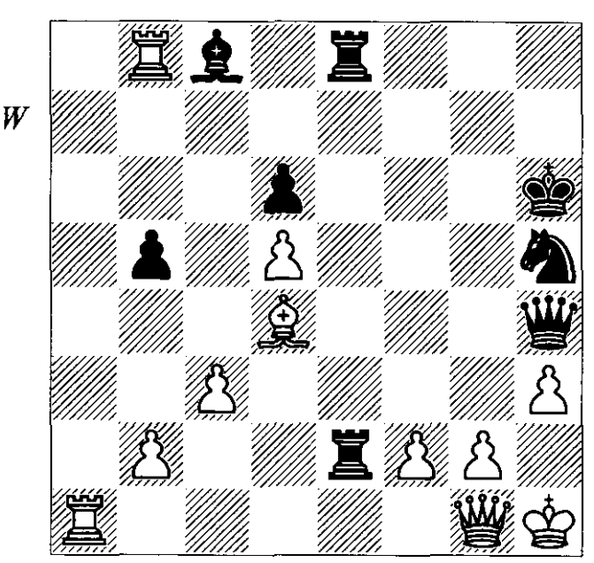
45...♗xe3 46 fxe3 g4 0-1

White resigned, faced with 47...♔e5 and 48...♔xe4 (if 48 b5, then 48...♔d6 wins) so as later on to support the passed pawns, and promote much sooner than the b4-pawn.

Exercise 57

Inarkiev – Kamsky

Baku 2008



White has a slight material advantage – four pawns for the piece – but for the time being, with the queens on the board, they are not so

important. Black is active on the kingside but his king has lost all its pawns.

What must White do? Can he attack the black king? Or should he worry about the defence?

43 ♖b6?

White underestimates the danger and decides to switch to the attack when the situation didn't allow it.

It is necessary to overprotect h3; 43 ♕f1! is best, when 43...♗xh3 44 ♖xe8 ♗f5+ 45 ♔g1 ♖xe8 46 ♕xb5 leads to a complex position. There are many black pieces threatening the kingside, but it is a great relief for White to have exchanged a pair of rooks.

Less convincing, but still better than the text-move, is 43 ♕c1+ ♘f4 44 ♖xc8 ♕g5 45 ♕f1 ♖xc8 46 g3 ♕xd5+ 47 ♔h2 ♖g8 48 gxf4 ♖xb2, with advantage to Black. White's king is a liability and forces him to remain passive.

43...♗xh3!

Black can ignore the threat to the d6-pawn because the attack he gets leads to mate.

44 ♖xd6+ ♔h7 45 g3

Or 45 gxh3 ♕xh3+ 46 ♕h2 ♖e1+ and mate.

45...♗g2++!!

This beautiful sacrifice is the key to the attack, and quickly leads to mate.

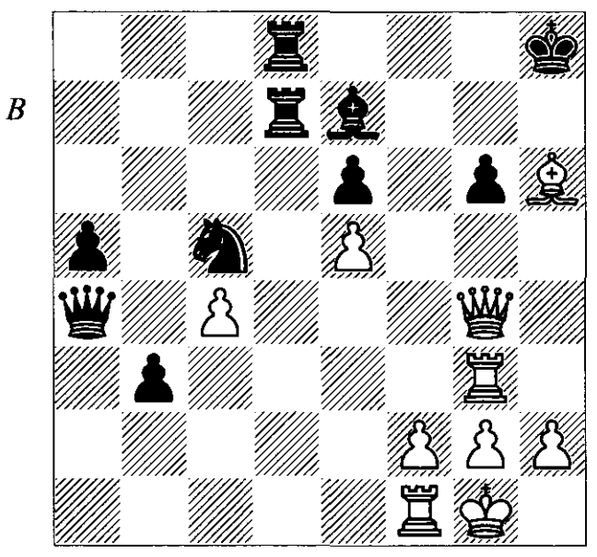
46 ♔xg2 ♕xg3+ 47 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 48 ♕g2 ♘g3+! 0-1

There follows 49...♖e1+, and mate.

Exercise 58

M. Gurevich – Pavasović

European Ch playoff (rapid), Plovdiv 2008



White had given up a piece for an attack and Black now has a winning material advantage with his queenside passed pawns. However, his king is very exposed and the black queen is far away from the defence. Therefore accuracy is required; e.g., 34...♖g8? fails to 35 ♕h3! ♖g7 36 ♗xg7++ ♔xg7 37 ♕h5 g5 38 ♖h3, winning: 38...♕xc4 39 ♕h7+ ♔f8 40 ♕g6.

So how should Black defend?

34...♖d1!!

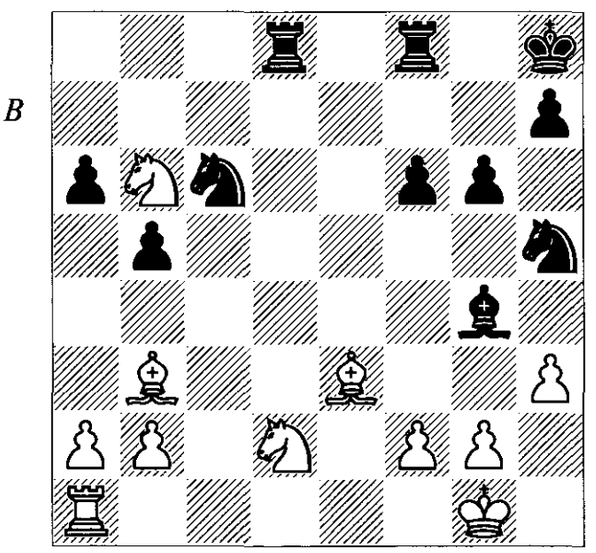
By counterattacking! The black pieces are badly placed for defence but very well suited for attacking the also exposed white king, and he gets there first.

35 ♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 36 ♕xd1 b2! 0-1

And finally the passed pawn delivers the *coup de grâce*: Black follows up with 37...♕a1, and it is now the white pieces which cannot come to the defence.

Solutions to Additional Exercises

Exercise 10a



24...♗e2?

The bishop is badly placed here – it takes this square away from the black knight and loses control of e6.

Correct was 24...♗c8! 25 ♖c1 ♗b7 (not 25...♘d4 26 ♖xc8! ♖xc8 27 ♗xd4) with a clear advantage to Black (Anand).

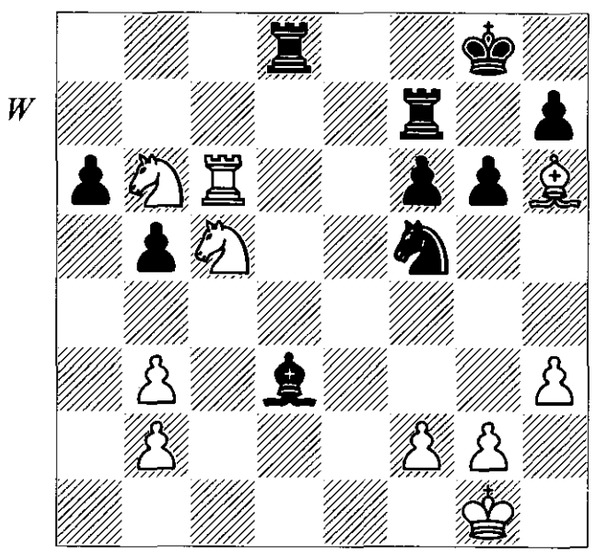
25 ♖c1 ♘d4 26 ♖c7! ♘g7 27 ♘e4 ♘xb3 28 axb3 ♔g8 29 ♗h6?

29 ♖a7! is better, with just a slight advantage for Black (Anand).

29...♘e8 30 ♖e7 ♖f7 31 ♖e6 ♗d3 32 ♘c5 ♘g7 33 ♖c6?!

33 ♖e1! is better.

33...♘f5! *(D)*

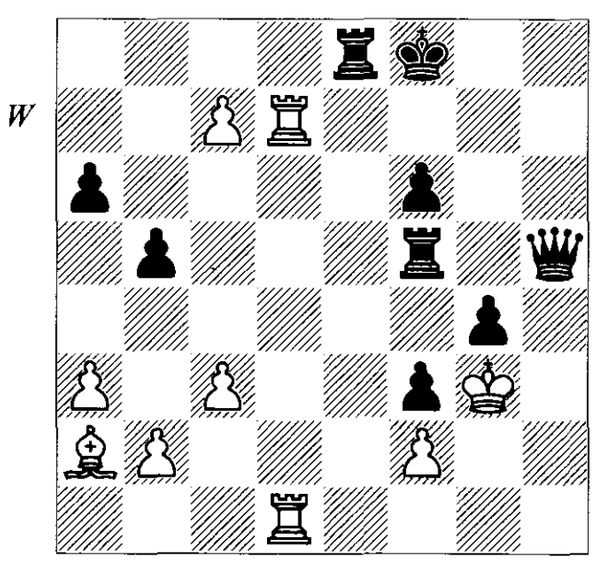


Now the annoying h6-bishop disappears.

34 ♘xd3 ♘xh6 35 ♘c5 ♘f5 36 ♘e6? ♖d1+ 37 ♔h2 ♘e7 0-1

Black will win one of White's knights with 38...♖d6.

Exercise 20a

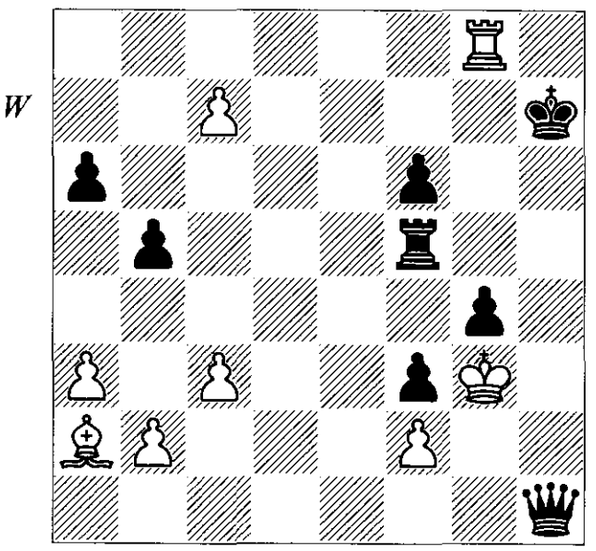


43 ♖h1!!

A beautiful deflection: if the queen moves aside, then 44 ♖h8+ wins, so there is no other option but to capture on h1.

This move was also the winning one before, in the position mentioned in the note to Black's 41st move after 42...♔g8. In this case after 43 ♖h1!! ♕xh1 44 ♕xf5 White has an extra piece which, the strange position of his king notwithstanding, he converts somewhat easily.

43...♕xh1 44 ♖f7+ ♔g8 45 ♖e7+ ♔h8 46 ♖xe8+ ♔g7 47 ♖g8+ ♔h7 *(D)*



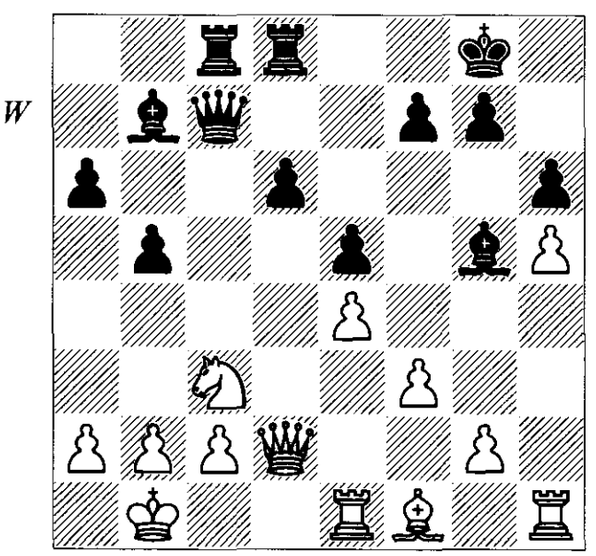
The threat of mate against the white king is renewed but once again it is White's turn to play...

48 ♖h8+!

...and once more he delivers a demolishing check.

48...♔xh8 49 c8♕+ ♔g7 50 ♕g8+ 1-0

Exercise 40a

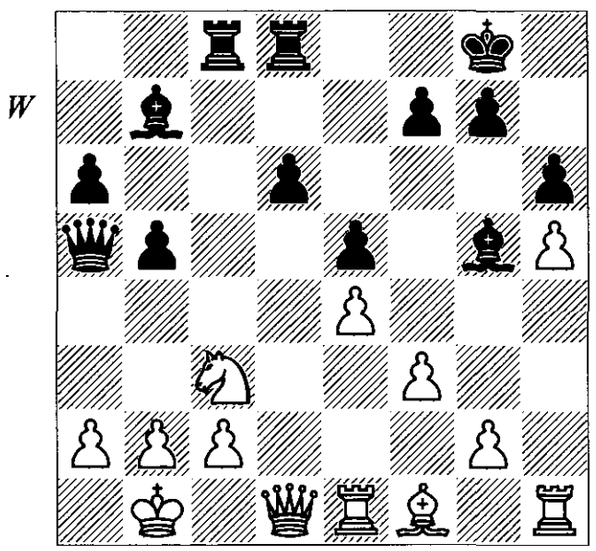


20 ♕d1?

The white pieces will now end up badly co-ordinated. The right move is 20 ♕d3!, for if 20...♕a5?!, White has 21 ♖d1! at his disposal.

White needn't fear 20...b4 21 ♘d5 ♗xd5 22 exd5 either, as he can follow with ♕e4 and ♗d3. The break 20...d5! is best, although by giving up a pawn with 21 ♘xd5 (not 21 exd5? b4!) 21...♗xd5 22 exd5 ♖xd5 23 ♕b3 (avoiding 23 ♕e4? ♖d4 24 ♕f5 e4 and 23 ♕f5? e4 24 ♕xe4 ♖e5, when White loses) 23...♖d2 24 ♗d3 ♖xg2 25 ♗e4, "White has kept his disadvantage in limits." (Anand).

20...♕a5! *(D)*

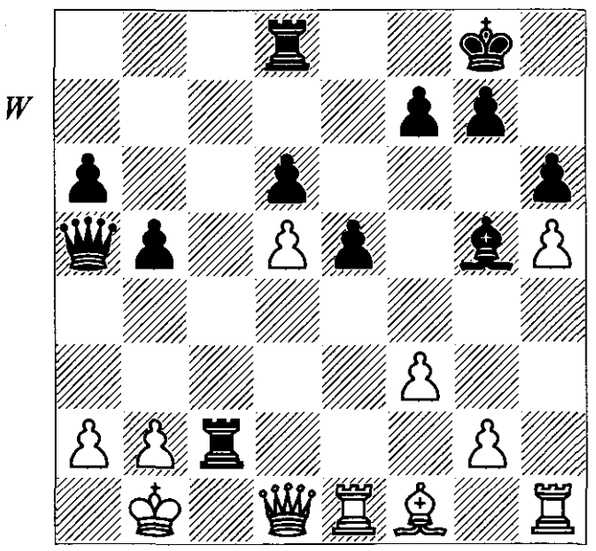


Now the white queen must defend the e1-rook; e.g., 21 ♕d3? loses to 21...b4 22 ♘d5 b3!.

21 ♘d5

Against 21 ♗d3 another typical Sicilian motif proves decisive: 21...♖xc3! 22 bxc3 ♗c8!, followed by 23...♗e6, with a winning attack for Black.

21...♗xd5 22 exd5 ♖xc2! *(D)*



The white queen is overloaded and Black obtains a decisive attack.

23 ♔xc2 ♕xa2

There is no defence against 24...♖c8+.

24 f4 ♖c8+ 25 ♔d2 ♗xf4+ 26 ♔e2 ♕xb2+ 27 ♔f3 ♖c1 0-1

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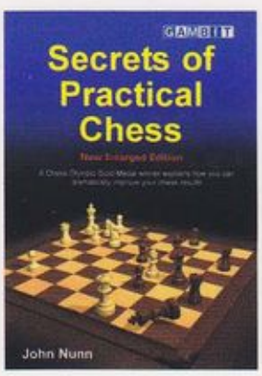

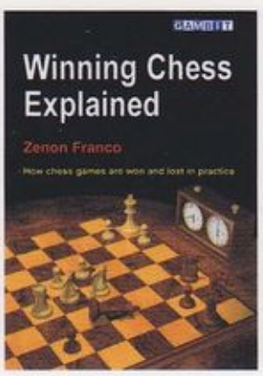

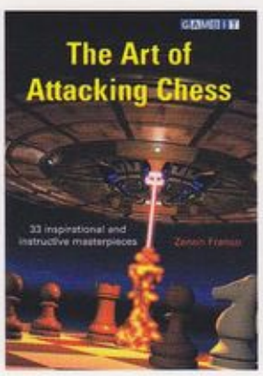

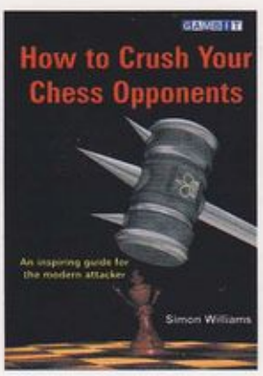

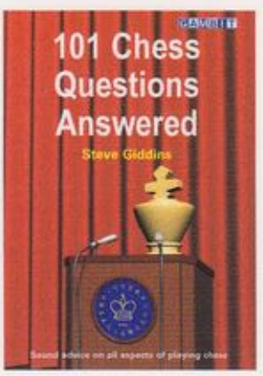

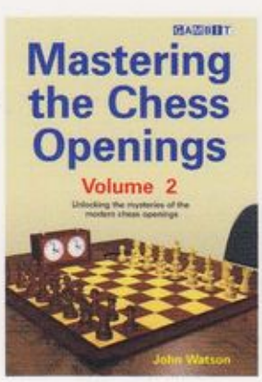

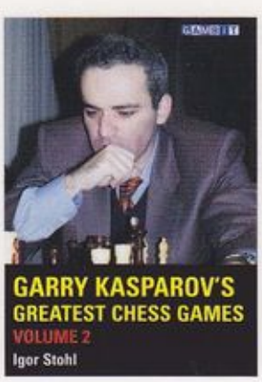

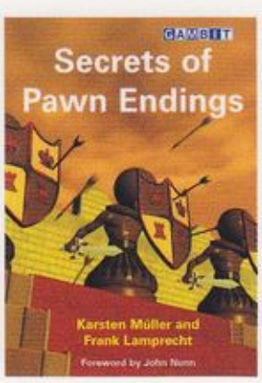

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